

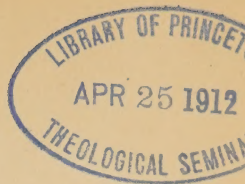
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Park, Edwards Amasa, 1808-
1900,
The atonement

Rev. C. A. Merrill.

From a friend. N. L. A.

Truman A. Merrill

THE ATONEMENT.



DISCOURSES AND TREATISES

BY

EDWARDS, SMALLEY, MAXCY, EMMONS, GRIFFIN,
BURGE, AND WEEKS.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

✓
EDWARDS A. PARK,

ABBOT PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, ANDOVER, MASS.

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THE RISE

OF THE

EDWARDEAN THEORY OF THE ATONEMENT:

AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

EDWARDS A. PARK,

ABBOT PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, ANDOVER, MASS.

(vii)

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

THERE is a theory, often designated “the Edwardean theory” of the Atonement. It has various other and equally indefinite names. It is called the New theory, the New England theory, the New School theory, the Hopkinsian theory, the Governmental theory, the Consistent theory, &c. It is called “Edwardean,” partly from the fact that certain germs of it are found in the writings of the elder Edwards, still more in the writings of his bosom friend, Hopkins, but chiefly from the fact that its more prominent advocates have been the so-called “successors of Edwards,” and among them the more noted, perhaps, is his son, Dr. Jonathan Edwards. The defenders of this theory make no claim to have advanced any fundamental truths not previously advocated by evangelical divines; but they may be justly regarded as having reduced old truths to a new system, — a system more consistent than had been previously drawn out; and also as having expressed the truths of this system in a distinctive, and in an unusually perspicuous style. They never counted themselves to have attained absolute perfection of doctrinal belief or statement, but they have probably come nearer to the perfect standard than have any other class of uninspired men. Their *doctrine* of the atonement is essentially the same with that of the elder Calvinists, but their *theory* of the atonement is more harmonious with itself, and with other parts of the evangelical faith; and their mode of expressing this theory is more precise, unequivocal, scientific. In the *substance* they are Calvinistic; in the *form*, they are Edwardean; hence they have

been called Edwardean Calvinists. They are not in *entire* agreement among themselves; President Dwight harmonizes not altogether with Dr. Samuel Spring; not one of them is responsible for all the words of any other; indeed, it may be questioned whether any Edwardean is perfectly reconcilable with himself in every one of his expressions. Entire self-consistency, on so complicated a theme as the atonement, is a jewel too precious to be found very often. Still the Edwardean divines have approximated, more nearly than other independent thinkers, to a system which is harmonious with itself and with the inspired word. They coincide in the main principles of a theory which may be expressed in the following propositions:—

First, our Lord suffered pains which were substituted for the penalty of the law, and may be called punishment in the more general sense of that word, but were not, strictly and literally, the penalty which the law had threatened.

Secondly, the sufferings of our Lord satisfied the general justice of God, but did not satisfy his distributive justice.

Thirdly, the humiliation, pains, and death of our Redeemer were equivalent in meaning to the punishment threatened in the moral law, and thus they satisfied Him who is determined to maintain the honor of this law, but they did not satisfy the demands of the law itself for our punishment.

Fourthly, the active obedience, viewed as the holiness, of Christ was honorable to the law, but was not a work of supererogation, performed by our Substitute, and then transferred and imputed to us, so as to satisfy the requisitions of the law for our own active obedience.

The last three statements are sometimes comprehended in the more general proposition, that the atonement was equal, in the meaning and the spirit of it, to the payment of our debts, but it was not literally the payment of either our debt of obedience or our debt of punishment, or any other debt which we owed to law or distributive justice. Therefore,

Fifthly, the law and the distributive justice of God, although honored by the life and death of Christ, will yet eternally demand the punishment of every one who has sinned.

Sixthly, the atonement rendered it consistent and desirable for God to

save all who exercise evangelical faith, yet it did not render it obligatory on Him, in distributive justice to save them.

Seventhly, the atonement was designed for the welfare of all men; to make the eternal salvation of all men possible; to remove all the obstacles which the honor of the law and of distributive justice presented against the salvation of the non-elect as well as the elect.

Eighthly, the atonement does not constitute the reason why some men are regenerated, and others not, but this reason is found only in the sovereign, electing will of God. "Even so Father! for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Ninthly, the atonement is *useful* on men's account, and in order to furnish new motives to holiness, but it is *necessary* on God's account, and in order to *enable* him, as a consistent Ruler, to pardon any, even the smallest sin, and therefore to bestow on sinners any, even the smallest favor.

These, and such as these, are the various statements of the principles constituting what has been called for more than sixty years, the *new divinity*, so far forth as it regards the propitiation for sin. The design of the present Essay is to develop the Rise of this Edwardean Theory of the Atonement. This design can be most easily accomplished by detailing certain principles avowed, and certain statements made by the four New England divines who seem to have exerted the greatest influence, either personally or by their writings, on Dr. Jonathan Edwards, Dr. John Smalley, and the other early advocates of the Edwardean scheme. Some of these principles and statements were probably designed to favor the view now called Edwardean. Others were not so designed; they suggested that view indirectly or by contrast; they intimated the necessity of a scheme more consistent with itself, and with other principles of those four theologians. It is the prerogative of clear thinkers, when they proclaim an error, to proclaim it in such a way as will suggest the truth to other thinkers equally clear.

I. The first of the theologians who suggested directly or indirectly the Edwardean scheme of the atonement is Jonathan Edwards, the senior. He adopted, in general, both the views and the phrases of the older Calvinists, with regard to the atonement. But like those Calvin-

ists, he made various remarks which have suggested the more modern theory.

1. He exalts the Sovereignty of God in connection with the atonement. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the "new divinity" is, that it gives a prominence to God as a Sovereign in applying and conducting, as well as originating, the redemptive work.

a. President Edwards teaches that the *degree* of glory which we are to enjoy in heaven is determined not by the *atonement* of Christ, but by the *sovereignty* of God.

"In the mystical body of Christ, all the members are partakers of the benefit of the head; but it is according to the different capacity and place they have in the body; and God determines that place and capacity as he pleases; he makes whom he pleases the foot, and whom he pleases the hand, and whom he pleases the lungs, &c. 1 Cor. 12: 18; 'God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.'"¹

"Christ, by his righteousness, purchased for every one complete and perfect happiness, according to his capacity. But this does not hinder but that the saints, being of various capacities, may have various degrees of happiness, and yet all their happiness be the fruit of Christ's purchase. Indeed it cannot be properly said that Christ purchased any particular degree of happiness, so that the value of Christ's righteousness in the sight of God is sufficient to raise a believer so high in happiness, and no higher, and so that, if the believer were made happier, it would exceed the value of Christ's righteousness; but in general, Christ purchased eternal life, or perfect happiness for all, according to their several capacities. The saints are so many vessels of different sizes, cast into a sea of happiness, where every vessel is full; this, Christ purchased for all. But after all, it is left to God's sovereign pleasure to determine the largeness of the vessel; Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter. Eph. 4: 4, 5, 6, 7; 'There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism,' &c.—'But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' God may dispense in this matter according to what rule he pleases, not the less for what Christ has done. He may dispense either without condition, or upon what condition he pleases to fix. It is evident that Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter; for what Christ did was to fulfil the covenant of works; but the covenant of works did not meddle at all

¹ Edwards's Works, Vol. V. p. 428. The references to Edwards's works are generally to Dr. S. E. Dwight's edition. The references to the Miscellaneous Observations are to the *corrected copy*, published by Dr. Dwight as a *substitute* for the copy originally inserted in his edition, Vol. VII. pp. 405-572.

with this. If Adam had persevered in perfect obedience, he and his posterity would have had perfect and full happiness; every one's happiness would have so answered his capacity that he would have been completely blessed; but God would have been at liberty to have made some of one capacity, and others of another, as he pleased. The angels have obtained eternal life, or a state of confirmed glory, by a covenant of works, whose condition was perfect obedience; but yet some are higher in glory than others, according to the several capacities that God, according to his sovereign pleasure, hath given them. So that it being still left with God, notwithstanding the perfect obedience of the second Adam, to fix the degree of each one's capacity by what rule he pleases, he hath been pleased to fix the degree of capacity, and so of glory, by the proportion of the saints' grace and fruitfulness here. He gives higher degrees of glory in reward for higher degrees of holiness and good works, because it pleases him; and yet all the happiness of each saint is indeed the fruit of the purchase of Christ's obedience. If it had been but one man that Christ had obeyed and died for, and it had pleased God to make him of a very large capacity, Christ's perfect obedience would have purchased that his capacity should be filled, and then all his happiness might properly be said to be the fruit of Christ's perfect obedience; though, if he had been of a less capacity, he would not have had so much happiness by the same obedience; and yet would have had as much as Christ merited for him. Christ's righteousness meddles not with the degree of happiness, any otherwise than as he merits that it should be full and perfect, according to the capacity. And so it may be said to be concerned in the degree of happiness, as perfect is a degree with respect to imperfect; but it meddles not with degrees of perfect happiness."¹

b. President Edwards occasionally represents the act of imputing Christ's righteousness to us, as an act of sovereignty. He distinguishes

¹ Edwards's Works, Vol. V. pp. 426, 427. It is easy to see that the *phraseology* of President Edwards has here affected the *phraseology* of Dr. Emmons. Edwards declares that Jehovah may select one person for a *high degree*, another person for a *low degree* of good, according to the mere pleasure of the *Sovereign*, and that "Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter." Emmons applies to the distinguishing and selecting of the *persons* who are to receive *any* good, what Edwards applies to the distinguishing and selecting of the *persons* who are to receive a *high* rather than a *low degree* of good. Emmons affirms: "God grants regenerating grace to whom he pleases, as an act of mere sovereignty, without any particular respect to the death or atonement of Christ." — Works, Vol. V. p. 66. Emmons teaches that the regeneration of any man is a consequence of the atonement, but he denies that the regeneration of one man *rather than of another* is a consequence of the atonement. Edwards teaches that the glorification of any man is a consequence of the atonement, but he denies that the higher *rather than the lower degree* of glorification of any man is a consequence of the atonement or the righteousness of Christ.

sharply between strict *law and justice* on the one hand, and *sovereign pleasure* on the other. But he says that "God of his sovereign grace is pleased, in his dealings with the sinner, so to regard one that has no righteousness, that the consequence shall be the same as if he had."¹ When the sinner believes in Christ, God imputes to that sinner the righteousness of Christ, not because the sinner's faith has the merit of condignity, not because it has the "*merit of congruity*," not because there is "any *moral congruity*" between faith and this reward: but only because there is a "*natural fitness*" of the one to the other; it is "meet and comendecent" that the believer should be thus rewarded, "only from the natural concord and agreeableness there is between" faith and the blessings of justification.² Now when God bestows a favor upon men merely because it is "fit by a *natural fitness*" that he do so, he acts as a *Sovereign*, and not as a *Judge* in the exercise of distributive justice.

We are aware that Edwards often speaks of our Lord's righteousness as "*justly and duly*" reckoned to our account, and of believers as "*legally* one" with their Redeemer. But the statement that he *sometimes* ascribes our justification to "*sovereign grace*" is not refuted by the reply that *at other times* he ascribes it to *distributive justice*, as in the following passage, written when he was only thirty years of age, and afterwards pointedly condemned by Dr. Smalley.³

"The justice of God that required man's damnation, and seemed inconsistent with his salvation, now does as much require the salvation of those that believe in Christ, as ever before it required their damnation. Salvation is an absolute debt to the believer from God, so that he may in justice demand and challenge it; not upon the account of what he himself has done, but upon the account of what his Surety has done. For Christ has satisfied justice fully for his sin; so that it is but a thing that may be challenged, that God should now release the believer from the punishment; it is but a piece of justice that the creditor should release the debtor, when he has fully paid the debt. And again, the believer may demand eternal life, because it has been merited by Christ, by a merit of condignity. So it is contrived that that justice that seemed to require man's destruction, now requires his salvation."⁴

¹ Edwards's Works, Vol. V. p. 352.

² Ib. Vol. V. pp. 367-369.

³ See Smalley's Sermons on the Atonement, pp. 51, seq.

⁴ See Edwards's Life and Sermons, Hopkins's First Edition, pp. 309, 310.

c. President Edwards believes that the act of initiating a soul into union with Christ, is an act of free, *sovereign* grace. He affirms: "God will neither look on Christ's merits as ours, nor adjudge his benefits to us, till we be in Christ; nor will he look upon us as being in him, without an active union of our hearts and souls to him."¹ How then is a soul brought into this union with Christ? "Admitting a soul to an union with Christ, is an act of free and sovereign grace; but excluding at death, and at the day of judgment, those professors of Christianity who have had the offers of a Saviour, and enjoyed great privileges as God's people, is a judicial proceeding, and a just punishment of their unworthy treatment of Christ."² Here is a broad distinction between an act of *sovereignty* and an act of *justice*. So far forth as any thing is given on the ground of *merit*, in the sense of strict desert, it is not given in sovereignty; and so far forth as any thing is given in sovereignty, it is not given on the ground of *merit* in the sense of strict desert. President Edwards has been represented as uniformly teaching, that the justification of a believer, being effected *after* the believer's union with Christ, and on the ground of the believer's merit in Christ, is not an act of sovereignty, but an act of law and justice. But if this representation were true, it would not conflict with his teaching that the act of *initiating* a soul into a state of union with Christ, as this act is performed *before* justification, and *before* the Redeemer's merits are looked upon as the believer's own merits, is an act, not of law and justice, but of free, *sovereign* grace. Neither does this prominence given by Edwards to the Divine sovereignty at all conflict with his firm belief, that the influences of the Spirit are bestowed through Christ's mediation.³

d. As Edwards taught that the atonement was applied and conducted, so he taught that it was originated, by sovereign grace.⁴

2. President Edwards believed that there is a difference between the obligation to fulfil a threatening and the obligation to fulfil a promise. He believed that "God's truth makes a necessary connection between every threatening and every promise, and all that is properly signified

¹ Edwards's Works, Vol. V. p. 369.

² Ib. Vol. V. p. 429.

³ Ib. Vol. VII. p. 77.

⁴ Ib. Vol. V. pp. 400, 401; VII. pp. 69, 71.

in that threatening or promise.”¹ “God was absolutely obliged to execute his threatenings, “as he would speak the truth. For if God absolutely threatened contrary to what he knew would come to pass, then he absolutely threatened contrary to what he knew to be truth.”² This he could never do. Still Edwards believed that the obligation to fulfil a threatening does not result from the threatening itself, is not consequent on the threatening *as a threatening*; but the obligation to fulfil a promise does result in part from the promise itself; is, in a measure, consequent upon the promise *as a promise*. This is an important consideration on the subject of the atonement. Richard Baxter, Bishop Stillingfleet, Dr. Gale maintained, that a threatening does not pledge the veracity of God to execute it. Dr. Emmons asserted that a legal threatening expresses God’s “*disposition* to punish” the offender, but does not express his “*design*” to do so, and therefore does not pledge his veracity.³ Dr. Griffin contended that “the legal threatening is not a pledge of *truth* that the sinner will be punished; (for then how is that pledge redeemed when he is pardoned by the sufferings of another?) but a mere declaration of what is just and may ordinarily be expected.”⁴ Here these two writers did not agree with President Edwards, yet his remarks are fitted to suggest their theory. Edwards says:—

“The truth of the lawgiver makes it necessary that the threatening of the law should be fulfilled in every punctilio. The threatening of the law is absolute: ‘Thou shalt surely die.’ It is true, the obligation does not lie in the claim of the person threatened as it is in promises; for it is not to be supposed, that the person threatened will claim the punishment threatened. And, indeed, if we look upon things strictly, those seem to reckon the wrong way, that suppose the necessity of the futurity of the execution to arise from an obligation on God in executing, properly consequent on his threatening. For the necessity of the connection of the execution with the threatening, seems to arise directly the other way, viz., from the obligation that was on the omniscient God in threatening, consequent on the futurity of the execution.”⁵

“There is a necessity of the fulfilment of God’s absolute promises both ways; viz.

¹ Edwards’s Works, Miscellaneous Observations, p. 529.

² Ib. Miscellaneous Observations, pp. 527, 541, 542, 552, 553.

³ Emmons’s Works, Vol. IV. pp. 473–475.

⁴ Griffin’s Theory of the Atonement, pp. 165, 236.

⁵ Edwards’s Works, Vol. VII., Miscellaneous Observations, p. 527. See note on p. xii. above.

both by an obligation on God to foretell, or declare, or foredeclare, the future benefit, according to what he foresaw would be, and he intended should be; and also by an obligation on him to fulfil his promise consequent on his predicting, and by virtue of the claim of the person to whom the promise was made.

"And there is also an obligation on God to fulfil his absolute threatenings, consequent on his threatenings, *indirectly*, by virtue of many ill and undesirable consequences of the event's being, beside the certain dependence, or certain expectations raised by God's threatenings, in the persons threatened, and others that are spectators; which consequences God may be obliged not to be a cause of. But threatenings do not properly bring an obligation on God, that is consequent on them as threatenings, as it is with promises."¹

3. President Edwards condemned the distinction between the active and passive obedience of Christ. He says:—

"Indeed, all obedience, considered under the notion of righteousness, is something active, something done in voluntary compliance with a command; whether it may be done without suffering, or whether it be something hard and difficult; yet as it is obedience, righteousness, or moral goodness, it must be considered as something voluntary and active. If any one is commanded to go through difficulties and sufferings, and he, in compliance with this command, voluntarily does it, he properly obeys in so doing; and as he voluntarily does it in compliance with a command, his obedience is as active as any whatsoever. It is the same sort of obedience, a thing of the very same nature, as when a man, in compliance with a command, does a piece of hard service, or goes through hard labor; and there is no room to distinguish between such obedience of it, as if it were a thing of quite a different nature, by such opposite terms as active and passive; all the distinction that can be pretended, is that which is between obeying an easy command and a difficult one. But is there from hence any foundation to make two species of obedience, one active and the other passive? There is no appearance of any such distinction ever entering into the hearts of any of the penmen of Scripture."²

4. President Edwards did not maintain, in the same *style* in which some of the ancient Calvinists did, that we are admitted into heaven on the ground of Christ's having obeyed exactly the same precepts which

¹ Edwards's Works, Miscellaneous Observations, pp. 528-9. See note on p. xii. above.

² Edwards's Works, Vol. V. p. 403. Emmons follows President Edwards, and asserts: "Many make a distinction between his [Christ's] *active* and *passive* obedience; but there is no foundation for this distinction in Scripture." — Emmons's Sermons on the Atonement, p. 130.

we had broken, but he believed that the most essential part of our Lord's obedience by which we are redeemed, consisted in his 'voluntarily yielding himself up to the terrible sufferings of the cross.' "To do this was his [Christ's] principal errand into the world." Of course the "chief command" given him by his Father was, *to do* that "which was the errand he was chiefly sent upon, which was to lay down his life, and this command was the principal trial of his obedience."¹ The main part, then, of our Lord's meritorious obedience was not to a command precisely the same which has been imposed on us; for we are not bidden to lay down our life as an atoning sacrifice; but his chief obedience was to a law which we had never broken in the exact form in which he obeyed it. He yielded to the same legislative authority, to the same law in its spirit, which we ought to obey. Still "that act of obedience by which principally we are redeemed is obedience to a positive precept that Adam never was under, viz. the precept of laying down his life."² The difference, then, between President Edwards, and a majority of his "successors" on this topic is this: *he* teaches that saints are admitted into heaven on the ground of Christ's *obedience*, which obedience consisted *principally* in his obeying the command to lay down his life; *they* teach that saints are admitted into heaven on the ground of Christ's *sufferings and death*, with which his entire and perfect obedience was and must have been *inseparably* connected. It is easy to see that here the style of Edwards affected the style of his "successors."

5. The President maintained that we are delivered from hell on the ground of our Lord's sufferings as a *penalty*, and not on the ground of them as *meritorious*. The pains of Christ were *mere* pains, and had no moral quality, and therefore had no merit in the strict sense of that term.

"The satisfaction of Christ, by suffering the punishment of sin, is properly to be distinguished, as being in its own nature different from the merit of Christ. For merit is only some excellency or worth. But when we consider Christ's sufferings merely as the satisfaction for the guilt of another, the excellency of Christ's act in suffering, does not all come into consideration; but only those two things, viz. their equality

¹ Edwards's Works, Vol. VIII. pp. 173-175.

² *Ib.* Vol. V. pp. 404, 405.

or equivalence to the punishment that the sinner deserved ; and, secondly, the union between him and them, or the propriety of his being accepted in suffering, as the representative of the sinner. Christ's bearing our punishment for us, is not properly meriting that we should not bear it ; any more than, if it had been possible for us ourselves to have borne it all, that would have been meriting that we should not be punished any more. Christ's sufferings do not satisfy by any excellency in them, but by a fulfilment. To satisfy by a fulfilment, and to satisfy by worthiness or excellency, are different things. If the law be fulfilled, there is no need of any excellency or merit to satisfy it ; because it is satisfied by taking place and having its course. Indeed, how far the dignity or worthiness of Christ's person comes into consideration, in determining the propriety of his being accepted as a representative of sinners, so that his suffering, when equivalent, can be accepted as theirs, may be a matter of question and debate ; but it is a matter entirely foreign to the present purpose."¹

6. Edwards taught that, while we are delivered from ruin on the ground, not of our Lord's merits but of his agonies, we are admitted to heaven on the ground, not of his agonies, but of his merits. "It is only the *obedience* of Christ that is properly his righteousness."² This righteousness has a moral quality, therefore, it has merit, in the strict meaning of that term ; it is imputed to us, therefore we are rewarded.

¹ First, I would explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Sometimes the expression is taken by our divines in a larger sense, for the imputation of all that Christ did and suffered for our redemption, whereby we are free from guilt, and stand righteous in the sight of God ; and so implies the imputation both of Christ's satisfaction and obedience. But here I intend it in a stricter sense, for the imputation of that righteousness or moral goodness that consists in the obedience of Christ. And by that righteousness being *imputed* to us, is meant no other than this, that the righteousness of Christ is accepted for us, and admitted instead of that perfect inherent righteousness which ought to be in ourselves. Christ's perfect obedience shall be reckoned to our account, so that we shall have the benefit of it, as though we had performed it ourselves."³

"There is the very same need of Christ's obeying the law in our stead, in order to the reward, as of his suffering the penalty of the law in our stead, in order to our

¹ Edwards's Works, Miscellaneous Observations, pp. 551, 552. See note, p. xii. above.

² Ib. Vol. IX. p. 499.

³ Ib. Vol. V. p. 394.

escaping the penalty; and the same reason why one should be accepted on our account, as the other.”¹

“There is, therefore, exactly the same need, from the law, of perfect obedience being fulfilled in order to our obtaining the reward, as there is of death being suffered in order to our escaping the punishment; or the same necessity by the law, of perfect obedience preceding life, as there is of disobedience being succeeded by death.”²

“Therefore, if all sin is now forbidden, then we are now under a law that requires perfect obedience; and, therefore, nothing can be accepted as a righteousness in the sight of our Judge but perfect righteousness. So that our Judge cannot justify us, unless he sees a perfect righteousness, some way belonging to us, either performed by ourselves, or by another, and justly and duly reckoned to our account.

“God doth, in the sentence of justification, pronounce a man perfectly righteous, or else he would need a further justification after he is justified. His sins being removed by Christ’s atonement, is not sufficient for his justification; for justifying a man, as has been already shown, is not merely pronouncing him innocent, or without guilt, but standing right with regard to the rule that he is under, and righteous unto life: but this, according to the established rule of nature, reason, and divine appointment, is a positive, perfect righteousness.

“As there is the same need that Christ’s obedience should be reckoned to our account, as that his atonement should; so there is the same reason why it should. As if Adam had persevered, and finished his course of obedience, we should have received the benefit of his obedience, as much as now we have the mischief of his disobedience; so in like manner, there is reason that we should receive the benefit of the Second Adam’s obedience, as of his atonement of our disobedience. Believers are represented in Scripture as being so in Christ, as that they are legally one, or accepted as one, by the Supreme Judge: Christ has assumed our nature, and has so assumed all, in that nature that belongs to him, into such an union with himself, that he is become their Head, and has taken them to be his members. And, therefore, what Christ has done in our nature, whereby he did honor to the law and authority of God by his acts, as well as the reparation to the honor of the law by his sufferings, is reckoned to the believer’s account; so as that the believer should be made happy, because it was so well and worthily done by his head, as well as freed from being miserable, because he has suffered for our ill and unworthy doing.”³

¹ Edwards’s Works, Vol. V. p. 395.

² Ib. Vol. V. pp. 395, 396. See, also, Vol. V. pp. 397–407; Vol. III. pp. 294, 295.

³ Ib. Vol. V. pp. 399, 400. Here as elsewhere Edwards limits the word, atonement, to the *sufferings* and *death* of Christ. A majority of his successors have used the word, atonement, in this restricted sense. Some, however, include the obedience of Christ in his atonement. See Maxcy’s Discourse on the Atonement, pp. 99, 100.

7. President Edwards introduces various *explanations* of his language, which have suggested to his successors the propriety of a nomenclature needing fewer explanations.

a. He introduces brief, modifying phrases, which happily illustrate the tendency of his thoughts, and relieve his bolder statements from the objections originally suggested by them. Thus he says that "Christ suffered the wrath of God for men's sins in *such a way as he was capable of.*" Although he affirms that Christ suffered the punishment of our sins, he speaks with peculiar frequency of our Lord's agonies as "*equivalent,*" "*equal in value and weight*" to the punishment threatened us. He often employs the phrase "*as it were,*" and similar qualifying words, to denote that his original terms are not to be taken in their strict and precise meaning. Thus, with regard to an atonement as mitigating our *ill-desert*, he says:—

"None will deny that some crimes are so horrid, and so deserving of punishment, that it is requisite that they should not go unpunished, unless something very considerable be done to make up for the crime; either some answerable repentance, or some other compensation, that in some measure at least balances the desert of punishment, and so, as it were, takes it off, or disannuls it: otherwise the desert of punishment remaining, all will allow, that it is fit and becoming, and to be desired, that the crime should be severely punished."¹

So he often uses the disjunctive "*or,*" followed by words which explain and modify his original assertion. Thus:—

"That Christ indeed suffered the full punishment of the sin that was imputed to him, or offered that to God that was fully and completely equivalent to what we owed to divine justice for our sins, is evident by Psalm 69: 5."²

"If he [Christ] be a Mediator between God and guilty men, it was necessary that he should unite himself to them, or assume them as it were to himself. But if he unites himself to guilty creatures, he of necessity brings their guilt on himself."³

Christ united himself to all for whom he died; that is, he assumed

¹ Edwards's Works, Miscellaneous Observations, pp. 516, 517. See note, p. xii. above.

² Ib. p. 548. See note, p. xii. above.

³ Ib. p. 542.

them *as it were* to himself; and, therefore, in this sense, he brought upon himself their deserved exposure to punishment *as it were*. In the same manner Christ “did not rise as a *private* person, but as the *head* of the elect church; so that they did, as it were, all rise with him;” — “so that the whole church, as it were, rises in him.”¹ In each relation of the doctrine of atonement, Edwards uses these and similar qualifying terms; and unless we combine them with the descriptions which he often gives of the penal sufferings of our Lord, we shall fail to understand such vivid portraiture of those sufferings as are given in the following passage: —

“Christ never so eminently appeared *for* divine justice, and yet never suffered so much *from* divine justice, as when he offered up himself a sacrifice for our sins. In Christ’s great sufferings, did his infinite regard to the honor of God’s justice distinguishingly appear; for it was from regard to *that* that he thus humbled himself. And yet in these sufferings, Christ was the mark of the vindictive expressions of that very justice of God. Revenging justice then spent all its force upon him, on account of our guilt; which made him sweat blood, and cry out upon the cross, and probably rent his vitals — broke his heart, the fountain of blood, or some other bloodvessels — and by the violent fermentation turned his blood to water. For the blood and water that issued out of his side, when pierced by the spear, seems to have been extravasated blood; and so there might be a kind of literal fulfilment of Psalm 22: 14: ‘I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.’ And this was the way and means by which Christ stood up for the honor of God’s justice, viz., by thus suffering its terrible executions. For when he had undertaken for sinners, and had substituted himself in their room, divine justice could have its due honor no other way than by his suffering its revenges. — In this the diverse excellences that met in the person of Christ appeared, viz., his infinite regard to the God’s justice, and such love to those that have exposed themselves to it, as induced him thus to yield himself a sacrifice to it.”²

b. President Edwards often *illustrates* the Atonement in a style which implies that the sufferings which were “transferred” from the transgressors to their substitute were penal, only in the general sense, and were not penal in the strict, precise sense; i. e., they were not inflicted in

¹ Edwards’s Works, Vol. III. p. 330.

² Ib. Vol. V. pp. 549, 550.

the *exercise* of distributive justice, and for the ultimate purpose of *satisfying* that justice toward and upon the sufferer. Thus he writes in favor of the rationality of the atonement : —

“The satisfaction of Christ by his death is certainly a very rational thing. If any person that was greatly obliged to me, that was dependent on me, and that I loved, should exceedingly abuse me, and should go on in an obstinate course of it from one year to another, notwithstanding all I could say to him, and all new obligations continually repeated ; though at length he should leave it off, I should not forgive him, unless upon gospel considerations. But in any person that was a much dearer friend to me, and one that had always been true to me, and constant to the utmost, and that was a very near relation of him that offended me, should intercede for him, and, out of the entire love he had to him, should put himself to very hard labors and difficulties, and undergo great pains and miseries to procure him forgiveness ; and the person that had offended should, with a changed mind, fly to this mediator, and should seek favor in his name, with a sense in his own mind how much his mediator had done and suffered for him ; I should be satisfied, and feel myself inclined, without any difficulty, to receive him into my entire friendship again ; but not without the last-mentioned condition that he should be sensible how much his mediator had done and suffered. For if he was ignorant of it, or thought he had done only some small matter, I should not be easy nor satisfied. So a sense of Christ’s sufficiency seems necessary in faith.”¹

The concluding part of this quotation represents the offended party as not *satisfied* with the sufferings of the mediator, unless the offending party comply with a certain condition. Faith must be exercised by the transgressor, or the person whose law has been transgressed is not satisfied. Now if the transgressor’s punishment has been literally and fully borne, and if the obedience due from the transgressor has been literally and fully rendered, by a substitute, the distributive justice of the lawgiver must be satisfied, without any further condition. *That* justice cannot demand more than the complete endurance of the penalty threatened, and the complete performance of the duties required. It is obvious, then, that President Edwards is not here speaking of *distributive* justice as satisfied with the literal *punishment* of a mediator, but of *general* justice as satisfied with such *sufferings* of a mediator as are

¹ Edwards’s Works, Miscellaneous Observations, p. 529.

equivalent to the punishment of the transgressors. This is the "Edwardean theory."

c. Edwards often gives such *definitions* of his language, as prove that he recognizes the distinction between its *precise* and its *general* meaning, and that he intends *sometimes* to use his terms not in their *stricter*, but in their *looser* sense. His successors here differed from him: they aimed, more frequently than he, to employ their terms in the *precise* rather than in the *general* import of them.

1. The President's definition of the word *merit*, on pp. 532-540 of his Miscellaneous Observations,¹ has been an eminently suggestive one, and indicates the progress of his mind on the whole subject of the atonement. The word, merit, strictly denotes a *moral* state. In regard to the atonement it denotes the state of moral desert involved in the moral excellence of the Redeemer's voluntary obedience. "He that is a servant," says Edwards, "and that can do no more than he is bound to do, can not merit."² But throughout a lengthened "discourse," the word *merit* is used by Edwards to signify not a moral, not a legal state, but a general recommendation, or a general means of securing favor. If the term punishment may be substituted for a kind of suffering which the law did not threaten; if the term reward may be substituted for a kind of happiness which the law did not promise; if the term justice may be substituted for general benevolence; then of course the term *merit* may be used to denote a general recommendation, or a general means of securing favor. But the writer who avows that he sometimes uses terms out of their strict signification, should not be interpreted as if he meant to use them always strictly and precisely.

"By *merit* in this discourse, I mean any thing whatsoever in any person or being, or about him or belonging to him, which appearing in the view of another is a recommendation of him to that other's regard, esteem, or affection. I do not at present take into consideration, whether that which thus recommends be real merit, or something that truly, according to the nature of things, is worthy to induce esteem, &c.; but only what actually recommends and appears worthy in the eye of him to whom it recommends the other; which is the case of every thing that is actually the

¹ See likewise Vol. V. pp. 425, 365, seq.

² *Ib.* Vol. VII. p. 69.

ground of respect or affection in one towards another, whether the ground be real worth, or only agreement in temper, benefits received, near relation, long acquaintance, &c. &c. Whatever it be that is by the respecting person viewed in the person respected, that actually has influence, and is effectual to recommend to respect, is merit, or worthiness of respect, or fitness for it in his eyes.”¹

Accordingly, throughout this “discourse,” whenever President Edwards speaks of *imputing* a patron’s merit to his client, *transferring* merit from the patron to the client, he means that the influence which recommends the patron prevails in recommending the client ;² the character and condition and history of an illustrious father are a means of securing favor of his child ; and when any relative is treated with attention on account of the wealth, or personal appearance, or honors of an ancestor, or a descendant, then the riches, beauty, popularity of that ancestor or descendant, are *transferred* to the relative, *imputed* to him ; they are the *merit* on the ground of which the relative is treated with attention. It need not be said, that the successors of Edwards did not object to the theory of imputation and merit in this comprehensive meaning of the words ; but as he did not always employ the terms in such a wide acceptance, and as he therefore fell into apparent self-contradictions, his followers learned the importance of adhering more uniformly to a restricted and an exact meaning of technical words.

2. The President gives a remarkable definition of the phrases : Christ “suffered the *punishment* of our sins,” “bore the *wrath* of God,” &c. He gives an analysis of the mental pains of our Redeemer, which is of unsurpassed interest. He suggests ideas which, although found in the writings of the old Calvinists, are nowhere so forcibly and philosophically presented.

First, he represents our Redeemer as having borne the divine anger, in the fact that Christ had “a great and clear” *sight* of the infinite wrath of God against the sins of men ; and also “a great and clear” sight of the punishment men had deserved. Christ *felt* what he *saw*. He agonized under, and so he suffered not *his own*, but *our* punishment ; the wrath of God not against *himself* but against *our sins*. He bore our

¹ Edwards’s Works, Miscellaneous Observations, p. 532.

² Ib. Vol. VII. p. 520.

punishment, in distinction from his being punished; he endured the divine anger, in distinction from his being the moral agent, the real person toward whom God was angry.

"It was requisite that at that time he should have a clear sight of two things, viz., of the dreadful evil and odiousness of that sin that he suffered for, that he might know how much it deserved the punishment; that it might be real and actual grace in him, that he undertook and suffered such things for those that were so unworthy and so hateful; which it could not be, if he did not know how unworthy they were. *Secondly*, It was requisite he should have a clear sight of the dreadfulness of the punishment that he suffered to deliver them from, otherwise he would not know how great a benefit he vouchsafed them in redeeming them from this punishment; and so it could not be actual grace in him to bestow so great a benefit upon them; as, in the time that he bestowed, he would not have known how much he bestowed; he would have acted blindfold in giving so much. Therefore Christ, doubtless, actually had a clear view of both those things in the time of his last suffering: every thing in the circumstances of his last suffering concurred to give him a great and full sight of the former, viz., the evil and hateful nature of the sin of man. For its odious and malignant nature never appeared so much in its own proper colors, as it did in that act of murdering the Son of God, and in exercising such contempt and cruelty towards him. Likewise, every thing in the circumstances of his last sufferings tended to give him a striking view of the dreadful punishment of sin. The sight of the evil of sin tended to this, and so did the enduring of temporal death, that is a great image of eternal death, especially under such circumstances, with such extreme pain, God's hiding his face, his dying a death that by God's appointment was an accursed death, having a sight of the malice and triumph of devils, and being forsaken of his friends, &c. As God ordered external circumstances to help forward this purpose; so, there is all reason to think, that his own influences on Christ's mind were agreeable hereto, his Spirit acting with his providence to give him a full view of these things. Now, the clear view of each of these must of necessity be inexpressibly terrible to the man Christ Jesus. His having so clear an actual view of sin and its hatefulness, was an idea infinitely disagreeable to the holy nature of Christ; and therefore, unless balanced with an equal sight of good that comes by this evil, must have been an immensely disagreeable sensation in Christ's soul, or, which is the same thing, immense suffering. But that equally clear idea of good, to counterbalance the evil of sin, was not given at that time; because God forsook Christ, and hid himself from him, and withheld comfortable influences, or the clear ideas of pleasant objects."¹

"Thus Christ suffered that which the damned in hell do not suffer. For they do

¹ Edwards's Works, Miscellaneous Observations, pp. 543, 544.

not see the hateful nature of sin. They have no idea of sin in itself, that is infinitely disagreeable to their nature, as the idea of sin was to Christ's holy nature; though conscience in them be awakened to behold the dreadful guilt and desert of sin. And as the clear view of sin in its hatefulness necessarily brought great suffering on the holy soul of Christ; so also did the view of its punishment. For both the evil of sin and the evil of punishment are infinite evils, and both infinitely disagreeable to Christ's nature: the former to his holy nature, or his nature as God; the latter to his human nature, or his nature as man. Such is human nature, that a great and clear and full idea of suffering, without some other pleasant and sweet idea to balance it, brings suffering; as appears from the nature of all spiritual ideas. They are repetitions (in a degree at least) of the things themselves of which they are ideas. Therefore, if Christ had had a perfectly clear and full idea of what the damned suffer in hell, the suffering he would have had in the mere presence of that idea, would have been perfectly equal to the thing itself, if there had been no idea in Christ in any degree to balance it; such as, some knowledge of the love of God, of a future reward, future salvation of his elect, &c. But pleasant ideas in this clearness being in a great measure withheld by reason of God's hiding his face; hence, the awful ideas of eternal death which his elect people deserved, and of the dismal wrath of God, of consequence filled the soul of Christ with an inexpressible gloom."¹

Secondly, President Edwards represents Christ as having borne the wrath of God in the fact that he endured the *effects* of that wrath, all that he suffered having been by the special ordering of God. The Father dealt with the Son "*as if*" the Father had been exceedingly angry with the Son, and "*as though*" Christ had been the object of Jehovah's dreadful wrath. It was the wrath of God "*against our sins*," that induced the Father to subject his beloved Son to the influence of evil spirits. "The prince of this world" "was let loose to torment the soul of Christ with gloomy and dismal ideas." Therefore these ideas were the effects of divine wrath. Satan probably did his utmost to contribute to "*raise*" Christ's "*ideas of the torments of hell*." These *ideas* of the torments of hell were substituted *for* the actual torments of hell, but were still the *effects* of divine wrath *against our sins*.²

3. In consonance with the principles laid down in 7, c. 2, above, although not in a necessary consequence from them, President Edwards

¹ Edwards's Works, Miscellaneous Observations, pp. 544, 545.

² Ibid.

gives a peculiar definition of the phrase: "Christ bare our sins." The old Calvinists explain it as meaning: "Christ bore the punishment of our sins;" "the wrath of God on account of our sins." Edwards admits this as a general explanation. He says "that the general meaning of the phrase [*to bear sin*] is lying under the guilt of sin, having it imputed and charged upon the person, as obnoxious to the punishment of it, or obliged to answer and make satisfaction for it; or liable to the calamities and miseries to which it exposes."¹ But, as we have remarked already, Edwards recognizes the distinction between the *general* and the *exact* meaning of terms, and avows his intention, sometimes, to employ his terms not in their exact but in their general sense. *Sometimes* but not *always*. The very Treatise which aims to show that, in a general sense, Christ "bore the divine wrath" in his feeling the hatefulness of sin, suggests a more particular sense in which Christ's enduring the divine wrath is contradistinguished from his bearing the hatefulness of sin. In this more particular sense, Christ bore the divine *wrath* in the fact that he had an affecting view of "the dreadfulness of the punishment of sin, or the dreadfulness of God's wrath inflicted for it;" but Christ bore our *sins* in the fact that he had an affecting view of their *evil nature*, apart from their consequences; of their *intrinsic odiousness*, apart from their penalty. To bear our *sins* is thus contradistinguished from bearing the *wrath of God* on account of them:—

"Thus, Christ bare our sins; God laid on him the iniquities of us all, and he bare the burden of them; and so, his bearing the burden of our sins may be considered as something diverse from his suffering God's wrath. For his suffering wrath consisted more in the sense he had of the other thing, viz. the dreadfulness of the punishment of sin, or the dreadfulness of God's wrath inflicted for it. Thus, Christ was tormented not only in the fire of God's wrath, but in the fire of our sins; and our sins were his tormentors; the evil and malignant nature of sin, was what Christ endured immediately, as well as more remotely, in bearing the consequence of it."²

d. The President makes prominent *distinctions*, which have recommended to his successors their peculiar nomenclature.

¹ Edwards's Works, Miscellaneous Observations, p. 531.

² *Ib.* p. 544.

1. He makes a prominent distinction between pain suffered in view of sin for the sake of upholding the authority of law, and pain suffered as *punishment* for sin, as the literal execution of the legal threat. He uses the words *misery, suffering, hardship, difficulties*, where the more ancient Calvinists would have used the word *penalty*. We do not, of course, deny that he often uses the word "*penalty*" as denoting the Redeemer's sufferings, nor that the elder Calvinists often use the words *pain* and *wretchedness* to denote the Redeemer's "*punishment*." But Edwards *more frequently* than they, and *in more prominent positions*, substitutes words which do not, for words which do imply that the threatened literal penalty was exactly borne in making the Atonement. In the very significant extract already quoted¹ we read: "Every thing in the circumstances of his last sufferings tended to give him a striking view of the dreadful punishment of sin." The same sharp distinction between the *sufferings* endured by Christ, and the *punishment* for which his sufferings were substituted, is made in another sentence. "It was requisite he [Christ] should have a clear sight of the dreadfulness of the punishment that he suffered to deliver them from;" not the *punishment* which *Christ* suffered in order to deliver *sinners* from suffering; but the punishment *of sinners* to deliver them from which Christ bore *suffering*. A large part of the pain which Christ endured, was the immediate consequence of his *love* for the redeemed; it was the *suffering of sympathy*.² His agonies were a means of his holiness.

"From what has been said, we may learn how Christ was sanctified in his last sufferings. The suffering of his soul in great part consisted in the great and dreadful sense and idea that he then had given him of the dreadful, horrid odiousness of sin; which was done by the Spirit of God. But this could not be, without a proportionable increase of his aversion to, and hatred of, sin; and consequently of his inclination to the contrary, which is the same thing as an increase of the holiness of his nature. Beside the immediate sight he had given him of the odious nature of sin, he had that strong sense, and that great experience of the bitter fruit and consequences of sin, to confirm his enmity to it. Moreover, he was then in the exercise of his highest act of obedience or holiness, which, tending to increase the principle, the bringing forth of such great and abundant fruit, tended to strengthen and increase the root. Those last

¹ Page xxvi. above.

² Miscellaneous Observations, pp. 544, 545.

sufferings of Christ, were in some respect like a fire to refine the gold. For, though the furnace purged away no dross or filthiness, yet it increased the preciousness of the gold; it added to the finite holiness of the human nature of Christ. Hence Christ calls his offering himself up, his sanctifying himself; John 17: 19. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." Hence he calls those last sufferings a baptism that he was to be baptized with. It was a baptism to him in two respects, as it purged him from imputed guilt, and as it increased his holiness by the Spirit of God, that gave him those terrible but sanctifying views. And so this is one way in which the Captain of our salvation is made perfect by sufferings; Heb. 2: 10, and 5: 9, and Luke 13: 32. Thus Christ, before he was glorified, was prepared for that high degree of glory and joy he was to be exalted to, by being first sanctified in the furnace."¹

Now that kind of pain which may be called a *purifying baptism*, which is involved in *sympathetic holy love*, and is, in its designed normal tendency, a *means of sanctification* to the sufferer, must be intrinsically different from the strictly penal anguish resulting from and designed to satisfy the indignation of God toward the beings whom he actually punishes.

2. Accordingly President Edwards distinguishes between both the nature and the degree of Christ's pains, and of the pains threatened in the law. He affirms that our Redeemer did endure what the lost spirits do not endure, and also that he did not endure what they do endure. The wicked in hell will suffer *the wrath of God against themselves* personally. "But this was impossible in Jesus Christ," "who knew that God was not angry with him personally, knew that God did not hate him, but infinitely loved him."² On the contrary, the lost spirits have no such idea of sin in itself as "is infinitely disagreeable to their nature," but this idea of sin was one principal source of our Redeemer's pain.³

And as Christ did not suffer *what* the impenitent are condemned to endure, neither did he suffer *so much*, nor *so long*. Although some of Edwards's remarks imply that our Redeemer endured exactly the same kind and degree of pain which were threatened in the law, other and more definite remarks imply that in bearing our sins and their consequences, he suffered a degree of pain far inferior to their infinite enormity. It is

¹ Edwards's Works, Miscellaneous Observations, p. 546.

² Ib. p. 543.

³ Ib. pp. 544, 545.

true, we often read in Edwards's Works, that Christ "comes under the sinner's obligation to suffer the punishment which man's sin had deserved;"¹ and that God "would not abate him [Christ] the least mite of that debt which justice demanded;"² and "God showed hereby, that not only heaven and earth should pass away, but, which is more, that the blood of him who is the eternal Jehovah should be spilt, rather than one jot or tittle of his word should fail, till all be fulfilled;"³ and that "the immutable truth of God, in the threatenings of his law against the sins of men, was never so manifested as it is in Jesus Christ; for there never was any other so great a trial of the unalterableness of the truth of God in those threatenings, as when sin came to be imputed to his own Son. And then in Christ has been seen already an actual complete accomplishment of those threatenings, which never has been, nor will be seen in any other instance; because the eternity that will be taken up in fulfilling those threatenings on others, never will be finished. Christ manifested an infinite regard to this truth of God in his sufferings."⁴ But these *general* remarks of Edwards must be compared with the more *particular* statements, that the legal threatenings were fulfilled *in the spirit of them*; so far as *the aim*, the great *design* of them is concerned; they were fulfilled by a suffering *equivalent* to the punishment threatened; they were fulfilled in the sense of a *manifestation* of their propriety; and thus the "strict justice of God, and even his revenging justice, and that against the sins of men, never was so gloriously manifested as in Christ."⁵ For that the sufferings of our Lord were immeasurably less in *degree and duration*, as well as in *kind*, than is the punishment threatened to sinners, President Edwards teaches in the following passages:—

1. "Christ felt not the gnawings of a guilty, condemning conscience.
 2. "He felt no torment from the reigning of inward corruptions and lusts, as the damned do.
 3. "Christ had not to consider that God hated him.
 4. "Christ did not suffer despair, as the wicked do in hell.
- "But it will be far otherwise with you who are impenitent; if you die in your present condition, you will be in perfect despair. On these accounts the misery of the

¹ Edwards's Works, Vol. VII. p. 71.

³ Ib. p. 77.

⁴ Ib. Vol. V. p. 544.

² Ib. p. 76.

⁵ Ib. p. 544.

wicked in hell will be immensely more dreadful, in nature and degree, than those sufferings with the fears of which Christ's soul was so much overwhelmed." "Christ's sufferings lasted but a few hours, and there was an eternal end to them, and eternal glory succeeded. But you that are a secure, senseless sinner, are every day exposed to be cast into everlasting misery, a fire that never shall be quenched. If, then, the Son of God was in such amazement, in the expectation of what he was to suffer for a few hours, how sottish are you who are continually exposed to sufferings, immensely more dreadful in nature and degree, and that are to be without any end, but which must be endured without any rest day or night for ever and ever! If you had a full sense of the greatness of that misery to which you are exposed, and how dreadful your present condition is on that account, it would this moment put you into as dreadful an agony as that which Christ underwent; yea, if your nature could endure it, one much more dreadful. We should now see you fall down in a bloody sweat, wallowing in your gore, and crying out in terrible amazement." ¹

"Let such senseless sinners consider, that that misery, of which they are in danger from the wrath of God, is infinitely more terrible than that, the fear of which occasioned in Christ his agony and bloody sweat. It is more terrible, both as it differs both in its nature and degree, and also as it differs in its duration. It is more terrible in its nature and degree. Christ suffered that which, as it upheld the honor of the divine law, was fully equivalent to the misery of the damned; and in some respect it was the same suffering; for it was the wrath of the same God; but yet in other respects it vastly differed. The difference does not arise from the difference in the wrath poured out on one and the other, for it is the same wrath, but from the difference of the subject, which may be best illustrated from Christ's own comparison: Luke 23: 31; 'For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' Here he calls himself the green tree, and wicked men the dry, intimating that the misery that will come on wicked men will be far more dreadful than those sufferings which came on him, and the difference arises from the different nature of the subject. The green tree and the dry are both cast into the fire; but the flames seize and kindle on the dry tree much more fiercely than on the green. The sufferings that Christ endured differ from the misery of the wicked in hell, in nature and degree, in the following respects." ²

3. President Edwards writes on the basis of a distinction between the statement that Christ was punished, and the statement that the sins of the elect are punished. His words imply, not that Christ was damned, precisely as the law had threatened, but that Christ suffered in view of

¹ Edwards's Works, Vol. VIII. pp. 176, 177.

² Ib. Vol. VIII. pp. 175, 176.

our damnation; not that Christ endured the wrath of God against himself, but the wrath of God against our sins; not that our Redeemer was conscious of our remorse, but he bore our remorse in the sense of being in anguish on account of it, afflicted in sympathy with it; not that he remembered his own guilt, but he bore our remembrance of our guilt; not that the elect have been literally punished, but *their sins* have been punished, in the sense that God has expressed his indignation against these sins, and Christ has agonized in view of that indignation, and in view of the sins, and *so* has borne both it and them. Our blessed Lord so loved his elect friends, that he suffered in the thought of God's distributive justice toward them, *as if, as though* that justice was armed against Christ himself, for it was against those whom he loved *as parts of himself*. Now either the elect are punished themselves, precisely as the law threatens them; or Christ was punished, damned, precisely as the law had threatened damnation; or the *sins* of the elect are punished in the sense of God's expressing toward those sins the feelings manifested in his law. To punish sin, without punishing the sinner, is to punish in a general, but not in the precise sense of that term. President Edwards often speaks of *sin* as being *punished*, when the sinner is not punished.

"And when Christ says, 'O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my guiltiness is not hid from thee;' thereby must be meant, that God did not forgive that which was imputed to him, but punished it. When God forgives sin, and does not execute punishment for it, then he is said not to behold iniquity, nor see perverseness; and to cover, and hide, and bury their sins, so that they cannot be seen or found; and to turn away his face from beholding them, and not to remember them any more. But when God does not remit sin, but punishes it, then, in the language of the Old Testament, he is said to find out their sins, to set them before him in the light of his countenance, to remember them, to bring them to remembrance, and to know them. And therefore, when it is said here, 'O God, thou hast known my foolishness, and my guiltiness hast thou not hid;' thereby is intended, that he forgives nothing to the Messiah, but beholds all his guiltiness by imputed sin, has set all in the light of his countenance, and does not cover or hide the least part of it."¹

The "successors" of Edwards contended the more strenuously against

¹ Edwards's Works, Miscellaneous Observations, p. 549.

this distinction between punishing *persons*, and punishing *sins*, because the Universalists founded one of their arguments upon it; and contended that, at the day of judgment, "the sins of men shall be separated from their persons, and their persons shall be saved, whilst their sins and the father of them, the devil, shall be destroyed. This our Lord teacheth in the parable of the tares, and the apostle Paul acknowledges to be true, when he says, speaking of his own evil conduct, 'It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.'"

4. Edwards recognizes a distinction between the *pain* of Christ and his *humiliation*, but regards both the *suffering* and the *abasement* as constituting Christ's satisfaction for sin, as involved in the penalty of the law.

"Whatever in Christ had the nature of *satisfaction*, was by virtue of the *suffering* or humiliation that was in it; but whatever had the nature of *merit*, was by virtue of the *obedience* or righteousness there was in it. The satisfaction of Christ consists in his answering the demands of the law on man, which were *consequent* on the breach of the law. These were answered by *suffering* the penalty of the law. The merit of Christ consists in what he did to answer the demands, which were *prior* to man's breach of the law, or to fulfil what the law demanded before man sinned, which was *obedience*.

"The satisfaction or propitiation of Christ consists either in his *suffering* evil, or his being subject to *abasement*. Christ did not only make satisfaction by proper suffering, but by whatever had the nature of humiliation, and abasement of circumstances. Thus he made satisfaction by continuing under the power of death, while he lay buried in the grave; though neither his body nor soul properly endured any suffering after he was dead. Whatever Christ was subject to, — that was the judicial fruit of sin, had the nature of satisfaction for sin. But not only proper suffering, but all abasement and depression of the state and circumstances of mankind below its primitive honor and dignity, such as his body remaining under death, his body and soul remaining separate, &c., are the judicial fruits of sin."¹

This is one of Edwards's profound and suggestive comments. He could not more fully indicate the importance of rectifying that terminology which represents Christ as being punished on account of our sins. For, with this meaning of terms, Christ was undergoing the penalty of the law while *his body and soul were free from all pain*. He had

¹ Edwards's Works, Vol. III. pp. 295, 296. See also p. 312.

promised to the penitent thief: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" and this cheering promise was not congruous with the idea that Christ through that entire day, would remain under the penalty of God's moral law. For, at the best, this penalty is terrible. The being who endures it, is not in a moral Paradise. President Edwards, in his comment on our Lord's promise to the expiring thief, quotes the expression of Doddridge: "The word Paradise originally signified a garden of pleasure, such as those in which the eastern monarchs made their magnificent banquets." Doddridge also speaks of this Paradise as "the abode of happy spirits when separate from the body," "sharing the entertainments of that garden of God," &c. President Edwards does not interpret 1 Peter 3: 19, as denoting that the soul of Christ descended from the cross to a prison-house; but he agrees with Beza, Doddridge, and others in supposing that this passage refers to Christ's influence by his Spirit upon the disobedient, *in the days of Noah*. Edwards's comment on 1 Peter 3: 19 is: "By the same Spirit by which Christ himself was quickened, he strove with the men of the old world to bring them to a spiritual resurrection, or to live according to God, as in verse 6 of the next chapter." In his comment on Matthew 27: 51, Edwards says: "That day that Christ died was the Great day of atonement, typified by the day of atonement of old, when the high-priest entered into the Holy of holies. Christ, as God-man, could enter into heaven no other way than by rending this veil. Christ offered his sacrifice in the outward court, in this world, and then, in the conclusion of it, rent the veil, that his blood might be sprinkled within the veil." Many other remarks of Edwards prove that he regarded the Redeemer as entering *heaven* immediately after the cry: "It is finished." But, according to the phraseology of Edwards, it is the fact, that, while *in heaven*, Christ was reaping the *judicial fruit of sin*, satisfying the *vindictive justice* of God, receiving the expression of the *anger* of God, and yet *neither his body nor soul properly endured any suffering!* This explanation of the President could not fail to remind his "successors" of the evils resulting from so vague a nomenclature. Therefore they did not allow, that any being *in heaven* can be undergoing a literal *punishment*, that there can be any literal penalty of the law without *suffering*, that any part of the atone-

ment consisted in Christ's literally *satisfying the demands* of the law for our *punishment*, while he was in Paradise.

5. Edwards recognized the distinction between the statement, that God in justifying sinners "*treats them as if* they were righteous," and the statement that he "*regards them as* righteous;" and Edwards believed that *both* of these assertions are true, and *both* are involved in the comprehensive statement of the doctrine of justification. To *pronounce* a judgment that men are sinless, is one thing; to judge *inwardly* that they are sinless, is another thing. According to Edwards, all God's judgments are agreeable to the truth; if he *openly* pronounces judgment in our favor, he *inwardly* judges in our favor; if he *exhibits* regard, he *feels* regard; if he treats men *as though* he approves them, he *does* approve them; when he imputes perfect obedience to believers, it is not their own original and personal obedience, but, through grace, it is an obedience *really belonging* to them; when "the righteousness of Christ is accepted for us and admitted, instead of that perfect inherent righteousness which ought to be in ourselves," it is accepted as the ground of our being *inwardly thought* to be righteous, not less than the ground of our being outwardly treated as righteous; and when "Christ's perfect obedience shall be reckoned to our account, so that we shall have the benefit of it as though we had performed it ourselves," we shall have the benefit of it in the *internal regard* of the Most High, not less than in his *external manifestation* of that regard. Christ is both *treated* as righteous, and also *regarded* as righteous; so believers, when they are *justified*, are both *treated* and *regarded* as Christ is, for they *participate* in his justification.

"A person is to be *justified*, when he is approved of God as free from the guilt of sin and its deserved punishment, and as having that righteousness belonging to him that entitles to the reward of life."¹

"The justification of a believer is no other than his being admitted to communion in the justification of [Christ] this head and surety of all believers;"—"our second surety (in whose justification all whose surety he is, are virtually justified)."²

"If a person should be justified without a righteousness, the judgment would not

¹ Edwards's Works, Vol. V. p. 354.

² Ib. Vol. V. pp. 354, 355.

be according to truth. The sentence of justification would be a false sentence, unless there be a righteousness performed, that is by the judge properly looked upon as his." ¹

"The law is the judge's rule: if he pardons and hides what really is, and so does not pass sentence according to what things are in themselves, he either does not act the part of a judge, or else judges falsely." ²

"So that our Judge cannot justify us, unless he sees a perfect righteousness, some way belonging to us, either performed by ourselves, or by another, and justly and duly reckoned to our account." ³

"To be justified, is to be approved of and accepted: But a man may be said to be approved and accepted in two respects; the one is to be approved really, and the other is to be approved and accepted declaratively. Justification is two-fold; it is either the acceptance and approbation of the judge itself, or the manifestation of that approbation, by a sentence or judgment declared by the judge, either to our own consciences, or to the world. If justification be understood in the former sense, for the approbation itself, that is only⁴ that by which we become fit to be approved: But if it be understood in the latter sense, for the manifestation of this approbation, it is by whatever is a proper evidence of that fitness. In the former, only faith is concerned; because it is by that only in us that we become fit to be accepted and approved: In the latter, whatever is an evidence of our fitness, is alike concerned. And, therefore, take justification in this sense, and then faith, and all other graces and good works, have a common and equal concern in it: For any other grace, or holy act, is equally an evidence of a qualification for acceptance or approbation, as faith.

"To justify has always, in common speech, signified indifferently, either simple approbation, or testifying that approbation; sometimes one, and sometimes the other; because they are both the same, only as one is outwardly what the other is inwardly. So we, and it may be all nations, are wont to give the same names to two things, when one is only declarative of the other. Thus, sometimes, judging intends only judging in our thoughts; at other times, testifying and declaring judgment. So such words as justify, condemn, accept, reject, prize, slight, approve, renounce, are sometimes put for mental acts, at other times, for an outward treatment. So in the sense in which the apostle James seems to use the word *justify*, for *manifestative justification*, a man is justified not only by *faith*, but also by *works*; as a tree is manifested to be good, not only by immediately examining the tree, but also by the fruit." ⁵

¹ Edwards's Works, Vol. V. p. 397.

² *Ib.* Vol. V. p. 398.

³ *Ib.* Vol. V. p. 399.

⁴ Is not the word *by* accidentally omitted here? Does not the author mean: Justification is only *by* that by which we become fit to be approved? See the following sentence.

⁵ Edwards's Works, Vol. V. p. 441.

Some divines have affirmed that in the passages just quoted Edwards, often inconsistent with himself, contradicts what he has taught in other passages. Other divines have supposed, that here is no *real*, but only a *seeming* contradiction; that Edwards at one time employs his language in its precise, and at another time in its loose acceptation. : Thus, in a *general* sense, believing sinners have *merit*; ¹ in *that* sense God inwardly approves of them, and outwardly treats them as approved. In a *general* sense they are *one* with Christ; in *that* sense, his righteousness is theirs, belongs to them, therefore may be *justly* imputed to them, of course they may be justly treated as possessing it. In a *general* sense Christ has been punished for them, and they deserve no more punishment; Christ has done their duty for them, and they in him have fulfilled the law: in *that* sense, God regards them as righteous, and consequently treats them so, — and in his thus regarding them, he judges “*according to truth*,” and in his thus treating them, he treats them *justly*.² When, however, all these words are used in their *restricted*, and not in their *general* sense, President Edwards refers the phenomena denoted by them to the sovereignty of God.³

The fact that this profound author so often used language in its looser sense, and then exchanged the vague for the exact terminology, has tempted opposing parties of theologians to claim him as their champion; and, as it has introduced apparent inconsistencies into his writings, it has led his “successors” to confine themselves, more than he did, to a precise nomenclature.

8. President Edwards gave a previously unwonted prominence to the element of *love* in the atonement. The preceding extracts suggest this fact. His theory of virtue would incline us to anticipate it. His lengthened discourse on the *merit* of the patron, and the union of the client with the patron, is a remarkable illustration of the prominence of love in originating, planning, and accepting the vicarious offering of Christ.⁴ He not only represents *love* as the first motive prompting our Redeemer to undertake his mission, but he also represents a sympathetic love as

¹ See above, I. 7. c. 1. p. xxiv.

² Ib. I. 6. p. xix.

³ Ib. I. 1. p. xii.

⁴ Edwards's Works, Miscellaneous Observations, pp. 532-541.

one principal means of the Redeemer's suffering, after he had undertaken the work of redeeming us. The following remarkable passage illustrates the prominence which Edwards gives to the element of love in the atonement, and also the peculiar sense in which Christ bore our punishment.

"Christ's great love and pity to the elect (that his offering up himself on the cross was the greatest act and fruit of, and consequently which he was then in the highest exercise of) was one source of his suffering. A strong exercise of love excites a lively idea of the object beloved. And a strong exercise of pity excites a lively idea of the misery under which he pities them. Christ's love then brought his elect infinitely near to him in that great act and suffering wherein he especially stood for them, and was substituted in their stead: and his love and pity fixed the idea of them in his mind, as if he had really been they; and fixed their calamity in his mind, as though it really was his. A very strong and lively love and pity towards the miserable, tends to make their case ours; as in other respects, so in this in particular, as it doth in our idea place us in their stead, under their misery, with a most lively, feeling sense of that misery, as it were feeling it for them, actually suffering it in their stead by strong sympathy."¹

"It was the lively exercise of love and pity to those that the Father had given him, that was one thing that occasioned so lively a view of the punishment they had exposed themselves to, whereby his soul was filled with a dismal sense, and so he suffered. But this lively love and pity at the same time engaged him to suffer for them, to deliver them from their deserved punishment that he had an idea of. And as pity towards his elect excited a lively idea of their misery; so, on the other hand, the increase of his idea of their misery excited strong exercises of pity, and this pity engaged him still to endure those sufferings in their stead."²

II. The second name on the list of those who have directly or indirectly, with or without an aim to do so, suggested the Edwardean theory of the Atonement, is Joseph Bellamy, the pupil and friend of the elder Edwards, the theological teacher of the younger Edwards and of Smalley. Like the elder Edwards, he sanctioned, in the main, both the views and the phrases of the Old Calvinists. He repeatedly declares that God must, and that he "does always, throughout all his dominions, not only in word threaten, but in fact punish it [sin] with infinite severity, without the least mitigation, or abatement in any one instance whatever."³

¹ Edwards's Works, Miscellaneous Observations, p. 5

Ib. p. 546.

³ Bellamy's Works, Vol. I. pp. 262, 263.

For other expressions favoring the Ancient Calvinism, see Vol. I. pp. 273, 274, 284, 313 ; Vol. II. pp. 284, 288, &c. of Bellamy's works.

Still, this bold writer develops certain relations of the Old theory which decidedly recommend the New. Thus on the ancient Calvinistic ground, the Atonement ought to be described as originating partly from the distributive justice of God ; and in agreement with this, Dr. Bellamy says that God's "inclination to punish sin according to its desert, induced him to give his Son to die in our stead."¹ This forcible reasoner also introduces a class of ideas which are the germs of the Consistent Calvinism developed soon after he published his treatises. Thus he insists, in opposition to many ancient Calvinists, that "justifying faith is a holy act," not "a thing in which the mind is merely passive."² He gives a peculiar interpretation of Rom. 4: 5 ; an interpretation eminently suggestive, although different from that of the Old, and that of the Modern Calvinists. He interprets the words, "Faith is counted for righteousness" as denoting, not that faith is imputed *as perfect obedience to the moral law*, but as *a full compliance with the conditions of the Gospel*.³ Let us now consider, more at length, certain particulars in which Dr. Bellamy either presses the Old Calvinism so far as to recommend the New by contrast, or else deviates from the Old Calvinism and suggests the germinal principles of the New.

1. This fervid reasoner sometimes pours forth his thoughts in such language, as at first view makes an impression that God himself "undertook" to do all that was required of man, and that God obeyed the law "under the penalty that lay upon man to have undergone." We do not so much as presume that Bellamy received into his creed the definite proposition, that when Christ rendered the moral obedience which was not obligatory upon him, he did it *as God* ; we only assert that this writer's glowing words *intimate* such a proposition. He not only teaches the truth, that every created agent is under obligation to do whatever God requires of him, and no created agent has a right to do what God does not require of him ;⁴ but he often says of Christ, "As he was God, he was under no obligations, on his own account, to obey a law made for

¹ Bellamy's Works, Vol. II. p. 343.

² Ib. Vol. I. pp. 406, 408 ; Vol. II. p. 385.

³ Ib. Vol. I. p. 357.

⁴ Ib. p. 484.

a creature ;" "he was originally unobliged to do a creature's duty, being by nature God ;" and "a God lays aside his glory, appears in the form of a servant, and becomes obedient ; and so, in the creature's stead and behalf, pays that honor to the Governor of the world which was the creature's duty."¹ We read :

"On the one hand, were any in all God's dominions tempted to think that the great Governor of the world had dealt too severely with man, in suspending his everlasting welfare upon the condition of perfect obedience ? God practically answers, and says, 'I did as well by mankind as I should desire to have been done by myself, had I been in their case, and they in mine ; for when my Son, who is as myself, came to stand in their stead, I required the same condition of him.' And what the Father says, the Son confirms : he practically owns the law to be holy, just, and good, and the debt to be due, and pays it most willingly to the last mite, without any objection ; which was as if he had said, 'There was all the reason in the world that the everlasting welfare of mankind should be suspended on that condition ; nor could I have desired it to have been otherwise, had I myself been in their case.' On the other hand, were any tempted to think that God had been too severe in threatening everlasting damnation for sin ? Here this point is also cleared up. God the Father practically says, that he did as he would have been done by, had he been in their case, and they in his ; for when his Son, his second self, comes to stand in their place, he abates nothing, but appears as great an enemy to sin, in his conduct, as if he had damned the whole world. His Son also owns the sentence just ; he takes the cup and drinks it off. Considering the infinite dignity of his person, his sufferings were equivalent to the eternal damnation of such worms as we."²

Now at first thought the argument suggested by all this language is the following : Christ, as a man, was under obligation to obey the law for himself. He could not as a man do more than his duty. But he *did* more than his duty. He did *our* whole duty for us. He performed acts of obedience which answered all the preceptive demands which the law can make upon us. He *satisfied* all these preceptive demands. He performed our obedience so that it need not be performed over again by ourselves. All the good deeds which can ever be required of us, have been done for us by him. His performance of our duties was designed to be, and may rightly be given over, paid over, transferred, imputed to us. But he owed perfect obedience to the law for himself as a man ;

¹ Bellamy's Works, Vol. I. pp. 280, 281, 283, 437, 438.

² *Ib.* Vol. I. pp. 259, 285.

therefore, he must, as God, have rendered this obedience which was not required of him.

The advocates of the Edwardean theory of the atonement, did not regard this as a valid argument. They did not regard Dr. Bellamy as really intending to teach that the divine nature of Christ assumed all the relations and responsibilities of a subject to the law of Mount Sinai. Still, the *language* of Bellamy was instructive to them. It led them to a minute investigation of his meaning, and a cautious criticism of his language. He was wont to employ startling phrases. He speaks of the "death of an incarnate God." "But if, indeed, he was the God that created the universe; — oh how awful and solemn the thought! — if, indeed, he was the God that created the universe, who hung incarnate on the cross," &c. &c. "The Creator of the universe on the cross; dying as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin; offering up himself to his Father as a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the world,"¹ &c. &c. By these eloquent words, the impassioned orator *probably* meant, that the divine nature of our Lord added an infinite dignity to his human decease. So he *probably* meant that Christ's divine nature added an unlimited glory to his human obedience. But the *force* of Bellamy's argument is, that the obedience of the God-man cannot be efficacious, unless it be an obedience which the God-man is under no obligation to render. Now the *man* is under obligation to render perfect obedience to the law; therefore the atoning, and the free, unrequired obedience must be that of the *God*. The successors of Edwards and Bellamy endeavored to avoid both the substance and the *form* of such an argument, and zealously contended that the atonement did not consist in any supererogatory active obedience transferred from Christ to his elect.

2. Dr. Bellamy often shrinks from the logical results of the old Calvinistic theory of the atonement. *Often, not always*. If our blessed Lord has literally performed for us our whole duty, and has thus satisfied all the preceptive demands which the law can make upon us; if he has, in the same literal sense, endured the whole punishment which was ever threatened against us, and has thus satisfied all the penal demands of the law, it logically follows that God is *bound*, by distributive *justice*,

¹ Bellamy's Works, Vol. I. pp. 438, 440; Vol. II. pp. 316, 319.

to save all for whom Christ died ; their salvation can be *claimed* as a *right* on the ground of strict justice to their Surety, and to themselves as united with Him. They, as related to Christ, have borne their punishment already, and of course cannot be justly condemned to bear it the second time ; and also, as related to Christ, they have perfectly obeyed the law, and of course cannot be justly required to obey it the second time, and thus, in their relation to Christ, their obedience merits a reward from distributive justice. Many of the Old Calvinists have taught that Christ's passive obedience is imputed to us in order that we may have a "*legal security*" from eternal death, and Christ's active obedience is imputed to us in order that we may have a "*legal title*" to eternal life. Now, we do not deny, but concede, that Dr. Bellamy here and there drops a remark implying that in consequence of Christ's active obedience God is legally obligated to admit us into heaven, and in consequence of Christ's sufferings and death God is legally obligated to rescue us from hell ; but we maintain that *in general* Dr. Bellamy shrinks from these results of his theory, and is careful to represent the atonement not as obligating God in justice to save us, but as "*opening a door* for him to save us," "*removing a bar* to our salvation," "*making it consistent* for God to save us," "*taking all obstacles* out of the way of our salvation." He repeats these and similar phrases so often, gives them such a prominence, that he may be considered as one of the foremost men in recommending to New England theologians their favorite method of defining the atonement.¹ Thus he says :—

"Moreover, by all this [the fact of Christ's obeying the law for us, and suffering its penalty for us], a way is opened for the free and honorable exercise of mercy and grace towards a sinful, guilty world. It may be done consistently with the honor of God, of his holiness and justice, his law and government, his truth and sacred authority ; for the honor of all these is effectually secured."²

"Jesus Christ did, by his obedience and death, open such a door of mercy, as that the Supreme Governor of the world might, consistently with his honor, take what

¹ We discover similar methods of speech among the elder divines, particularly in Calvin and the elder Edwards. See Edwards's *Miscellaneous Observations*, p. 550.

² Bellamy's Works, Vol. I. p. 286.

methods he pleased, in order to recover rebellious, guilty, stubborn sinners to himself." ¹

"Now that what Christ has done and suffered was sufficient to open a way for the honorable exercise of his sovereign grace, in recovering sinners to himself, is evident from what has been heretofore observed. And that it was designed for this end, and has, in fact, effectually answered it, is plain from God's conduct in the affair; for otherwise he could not, consistently with his honor, or the honor of his law, use those means to reclaim sinners which he actually does." ²

"The next and immediate end of Christ's death was to answer the ends of moral government, and so secure the honor of the moral Governor, and open a way in which he might honorably declare himself reconcilable to a guilty world upon their returning through Christ, and use means to reclaim them; but this end Christ did obtain; and so did not die in vain. (John 3 : 16. Romans 3 : 24-26.)" ³

"Thus we see what necessity there was of satisfaction for sin, and that the demands of the law should be answered. And thus we see what has been done for these purposes, and its sufficiency to answer all the ends proposed. The Mediator was of sufficient dignity, as to his person; he had sufficient authority, as to his office; and he has faithfully done his work. And now the honor of God's holiness and justice, law and government, and sacred authority, is secured; and a way is opened in which he may honorably put his designs of mercy into execution, and sinners safely return unto him." ⁴

"The death of Christ was not designed, at all, to take away the evil nature of sin, or its ill deserts; for sin is unalterably what it is, and cannot be made a less evil. But the death of Christ was rather, on the contrary, to acknowledge and manifest the evil nature and ill desert of sin, to the end that pardoning mercy might not make it seem to be a less evil than it really is. So that, although God may freely pardon all our sins, and entitle us to eternal life for Christ's sake, yet he does look upon us, considered merely as in ourselves, to be as much to blame as ever, and to deserve hell as much as ever; and therefore we are always to look upon ourselves so too." ⁵

"It was not, therefore, because the goodness of the divine nature needed any motive to draw it forth into exercise, that Jesus Christ obeyed, and died in our room; but it was to answer the ends of moral government, and to secure the honor of the moral Governor; and so open a way for the honorable exercise of the divine goodness, which, in its own nature, is infinite, free, and self-moving, and wants no motive from without to draw it forth into action." ⁶

"In general, from what has been said, we may see that the mighty bar which lay in the way of mercy is removed by Jesus Christ; and now a door is opened, and a way

¹ Bellamy's Works, Vol. I. p. 299.

³ Ib. Vol. I. p. 302.

⁵ Ib. Vol. I. p. 289.

² Ibid.

⁴ Ib. Vol. I. p. 286.

⁶ Ib. Vol. I. p. 290.

provided, wherein the great Governor of the world may, consistently with the honor of his holiness and justice, his law and government, and sacred authority, and to the glory of his grace, put in execution all his designs of mercy towards a sinful, guilty, undone world.”¹

“For as the mediation of Christ was designed to secure the divine honor, and open a way for the exercise of divine grace to the glory of God the Father, and as he hath finished the work appointed him to do; so through *him* God can consistently with his honor, call and invite a guilty world to return and be reconciled, and can stand ready to pardon and receive to favor, and give eternal life to all that come to him in Christ’s name.”²

Similar explanations of the atonement are found in Bellamy’s Works, Vol. I. pp. 249, 257, 267, 270, 274, 276, 284, 290, 291, 293, 294, 297, 300, 301, 356, &c.; also in Vol. II. pp. 316, 326, 331, 339.

3. Dr. Bellamy gives especial prominence to the doctrine of General Atonement. This remark might have been included under the preceding head; but it merits a distinct place. If Christ literally obeyed the law for those whom he died to save; if he literally endured the whole penalty of their sin, then it would be unjust to require of them a second obedience when one had been fully rendered; and to threaten against them a second punishment when one had been completely borne; then all men for whom he died will be saved. But all men will not be saved. None but the elect will be saved. Then Christ died for the elect only. Thus the doctrine of Limited Atonement is a necessary result from the doctrine that Christ literally satisfied the demands of the law and of distributive justice. But Dr. Bellamy teaches that the doctrine of Limited Atonement is false. He thus undermines the whole theory of Christ’s literal punishment, and supererogatory obedience. He not only affirms that “the great God, instead of executing the sentence of the law in all its severity upon a guilty world, does, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, grant to mankind in general these [i. e. all their] common favors,”³ but he also affirms:—

“What Christ has done, is, in fact, sufficient to open a door for God, through him, to become reconcilable to the whole world. The sufferings of Christ, all things con-

¹ Bellamy’s Works, Vol. I. p. 292.

² *Ib.* Vol. II. p. 327.

³ *Ib.* Vol. I. pp. 311–317.

sidered, have as much displayed God's hatred to sin, and as much secured the honor of his law, as if the whole world had been damned; as none will deny, who believe the infinite dignity of his divine nature. God may now, therefore, through Jesus Christ, stand ready to pardon the whole world. There is nothing in the way. And the obedience of Christ has brought as much honor to God, and to his law, as the perfect obedience of Adam, and of all his race, would have done; the rights of the Godhead are as much asserted and maintained. So that there is nothing in the way, but that mankind may, through Christ, be received into full favor, and entitled to eternal life. God may stand ready to do it, consistently with his honor. What Christ has done is every way sufficient. 'All things are now ready.'"¹

The Old Calvinism teaches that although Christ's atonement be *sufficient* for all men, yet it was *designed* for the elect merely. Although it be great enough for all men, yet it was *intended* for only a part of them. But this dogma is denied by Dr. Bellamy again and again in express terms:—

"And God has expressly declared that it was the design of Christ's death to open this door of mercy to all."²

"And, indeed, was not the door of mercy opened to all, indefinitely, how could God sincerely offer mercy to all? Or heartily invite all? Or justly blame those who do not accept? Or righteously punish them for neglecting so great salvation?"

"Besides, if Christ died merely for the elect, that is, to the intent that they, only upon believing, might, consistently with the divine honor, be received to favor, then God could not, consistently with his justice, save any besides, if they should believe. 'For without shedding of blood, there can be no remission.' If Christ did not design, by his death, to open a door for all to be saved conditionally, that is, upon the condition of faith, then there is no such door opened: the door is not opened wider than Christ designed it should be; there is nothing more purchased by his death than he intended; if this benefit was not intended, then it is not procured; if it be not procured, then the non-elect cannot any of them be saved, consistently with divine justice. And, by consequence, if this be the case, then, first, the non-elect have no right at all to take any, the least encouragement, from the death of Christ, or the invitations of the gospel, to return to God through Christ, in hopes of acceptance; for there are no grounds of encouragement given. Christ did not die for them in any sense. It is impossible their sins should be pardoned consistently with justice; as much impossible as if there had never been a Saviour: as if Christ had never died; and so there is no encouragement at all for them; and therefore it would be presumption in them to take any; all which is apparently contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel, which

¹ Bellamy's Works, Vol. I. p. 292.

² Ibid.

everywhere invites all, and gives equal encouragement to all. 'Come, for all things are ready,' said Christ to the reprobate Jews. And if the non-elect have no right to take any encouragement from the death of Christ, and the invitations of the gospel, to return to God through him, in hopes of acceptance, then, secondly, no man at all can rationally take any encouragement until he knows that he is elected; because, until then, he cannot know that there is any ground for encouragement."¹

"But God never designed to bring the non-elect to glory, when he gave his Son to die for the world. He designed to declare himself reconcilable to them through Christ; to offer mercy; to invite them, in common with others, to return; and to assure all that he that believeth shall be saved; and to use means with them more or less, according to his pleasure; but finally, they being obstinate, he designed to leave them to themselves, to take their own course, and, in the end, to deal with them according to their deserts." (Matt. 23: 37, 38, and 22: 1-7.)²

It is important to remember, that the preceding quotations are made from Bellamy's "True Religion Delineated," and that this, his most elaborate Treatise, was carefully examined in manuscript by President Edwards, and was published with a Preface from Edwards, recommending the Treatise in exalted terms. Edwards has been commonly supposed (not without reason, as may be seen in his Works, Vol. III. p. 173, and Vol. VIII. p. 172) to have favored the doctrine of Limited Atonement. But he may have regarded that doctrine as not sufficiently important to require of him any notice in his recommendation of Bellamy's Treatise, or he may have changed his opinion in regard to it, or he may never have intended to represent it as a doctrine which he deliberately and fully believed. In fact, while some of his remarks oppose, others favor the doctrine of the *General* Atonement.

4. Dr. Bellamy gives especial prominence to the Sovereignty of God in the application of the atonement, and here he recommends one part, which in its logical results involves the whole, of the Edwardean scheme. He often recognizes, as in Vol. I. p. 264, the distinction between God "as a sovereign, and God as a righteous Governor." If all men literally sinned in Adam, if his crime be justly imputed to all men, then the evils to which they are subject from the first moment of their earthly existence are not the immediate result of Divine Sovereignty, but of Divine Justice. So, if all the punishment which the law threatens to the elect, has

¹ Bellamy's Works, Vol. I. pp. 294, 295.

² Ib. Vol. I. p. 307.

been endured for them, and thus the penal demands of the law are satisfied; and if all the obedience which the law requires of the elect has been performed for them, and thus the preceptive part of the law is satisfied; if Christ has "done the whole duty" of the elect, done it in their stead, for their sake, and with the design of securing their salvation, then he so deserves to be rewarded with their salvation, that he may demand this reward from distributive justice; and a refusal to give him this reward, to regenerate and save the elect whom he has purchased, would be radically and primarily unjust. Accordingly the elect are and must be saved not on the ground of present sovereignty, but on the ground of strict distributive justice, justice to Christ, if not to the elect as related to Christ. God was a sovereign in originally electing them and in providing an atonement for them; but *after* their punishment was suffered and their obedience fully performed, God is not a sovereign in remitting the debt so amply paid, nor in bestowing a reward so fairly earned. In decreeing that an atonement be made for the elect, he *was* fulfilling his sovereign pleasure toward them, but in applying the atonement to the elect, he *is* fulfilling the demands of distributive justice to Christ, if not to the elect as related to Christ. We do not say that this always *is* the reasoning of the Ancient Calvinists, but it always *ought* to be. Dr. Bellamy, however, teaches that God not only *was*, but *is* "at perfect liberty to have mercy on whom he will, according to his sovereign pleasure."¹

God "offers salvation to all, and uses arguments to dissuade them from perdition. But, inasmuch as mankind will not hearken, but are obstinately set in their way, therefore he takes state upon himself, and says, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy;' and a sinful, guilty world are in his hands, and he may use what methods of grace with all, that he pleases. Some he may suffer to take their own way, and run their own ruin, if he pleases; and others he may subdue and recover to himself, by his own all-conquering grace."²

"Thus Christ's merits are sufficient for all the world, and the door of mercy is opened wide enough for all the world; and God, the supreme Governor, has proclaimed himself reconcilable to all the world, if they will believe and repent. And if they will not believe and repent, he is at liberty to have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and to show compassion to whom he will show compassion; according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace. He sits sovereign,

¹ Bellamy's Works, Vol. I. p. 359.

² *Ib.* Vol. I. p. 300.

and a rebellious, guilty world are in his hands, and at his disposal; and the thing that seems good in his sight, that he will do; and it is infinitely fit, right, and best he should; that the pride of all flesh may be brought low, and the Lord alone be exalted forever.”¹

“God has always acted sovereignly in choosing what family, nation, or nations, he would preserve true religion among; all being by nature equally averse to God, and equally unworthy, and has always acted justly in giving over other families and nations for their sin and apostasy.”²

“And now, all this while, there was nothing but the infinite goodness, and free and sovereign grace of God, together with his covenant faithfulness, to move him not to cast off and utterly reject his people, and let them be scattered among the heathen, and their name perish from off the earth.”³

“Before men believe in Christ, they are as justly exposed to divine vengeance, as if Christ had never died. (John 3: 18, 36.) And there is nothing to keep off vengeance one moment but sovereign mercy; which yet they continually affront and provoke. (Rom. 2: 4, 5.)”⁴

III. The third writer whom we shall name is perhaps the most important witness in favor of the Edwardean theory, among those who did not openly adopt its distinctive style. We refer to Samuel Hopkins. We do not deny that like his teacher Edwards, and his companion Bellamy, he makes an impression favorable in many respects to the more ancient form of Calvinism. He exhibits, however, many salient points from which the Edwardean theory has been drawn out and built up. He reaffirmed some of the more important parts of this theory, long after he knew the manner in which they were used in compacting the Edwardean scheme.

Prof. Hengstenberg has remarked, that the prevalent theology of the United States is Rationalism, because this theology admits that faith is an act. Many of the Old Calvinists would at once infer, that Dr. Hopkins adopts an erroneous theory of the atonement, because this author teaches that “a disposition and *exercise* of the *heart*” are “implied in evangelical faith.” “For that in which the heart has no concern, and which does not imply any exercise of disposition or will, is neither virtue nor vice,

¹ Bellamy's Works, Vol. I. p. 301.

² Ib. Vol. I. p. 326.

³ Ib. Vol. I. p. 323.

⁴ See also Vol. I. p. 307-310, 321.

sin nor holiness; it has no moral good or evil in it, and cannot be the subject of command or prohibition, of blame or commendation.”¹ This view of faith, although but indirectly connected with the atonement, is yet vitally important to an accurate apprehension of it. But let us proceed to some more direct statements.

1. Dr. Hopkins adopts a peculiarly cautious phraseology in maintaining that the veracity of God binds him to execute, in all cases, the threatenings of his law.²

“And it is not consistent with the truth of God not to execute the threatening of his law; for this would not only be giving up and making void his law, but acting contrary to his own declaration. Divine threatenings are predictions declaring what shall be, and what God will do in case of transgression of his law. And it is as inconsistent with truth not to execute his threatening, in the true meaning of it, as it is not to accomplish and bring to pass what he has declared and promised shall take place. This law, therefore, must be maintained in the true meaning and spirit of it, as the grand and only perfect rule of rectoral justice, rectitude, or righteousness.”³

Did Christ suffer the literal penalty of the law? He must have suffered it, say many of the elder Calvinists, for God has pledged his veracity to inflict it, and as it is not to be inflicted on the elect, it must have been inflicted on their Substitute. Hopkins modifies this phraseology, and teaches that God executes the threatening of his law “*in the true meaning and spirit of it.*” He thus suggested to his successors the doctrine, that God inflicted on Christ sufferings, which were equivalent to the penalty threatened in the law. Hopkins is still more explicit and says: “Christ suffered the evil threatened, or as great evil, a complete equivalent;” “all the ends of threatening, and of a penalty are as fully answered by the sufferings of Christ, as they could be by the execution of it on the sinner;” “the threatening has been fully executed according to the true and declared meaning of it when it was given.”⁴ Dr. Hopkins believed, as many of the elder Calvinists have taught, that “when

¹ Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. pp. 454, 464.

² See I. 2. pp. xv, xvi. above.

³ Ib. Vol. I. pp. 321, 322.

⁴ Ib. Vol. I. pp. 340, 341. See likewise p. 485.

man was first created it was made known by the Legislator that his law admitted of vicarious obedience ; that the obedience of one might be the proper ground of granting the greatest favors to all whom he represented, and for whom, and in whose stead, he acted.”¹

2. The author of the sentences quoted above is, as might be expected, equally cautious in occasionally qualifying the statement, that Christ suffered the penalty of the law for us. He suggests the Edwardean theory, when he speaks of the penalty of the law, *or something equivalent*.

“When it is said, ‘Christ died for our sins,’ the meaning must be that his death is the atonement and propitiation for sin ; and that by it he suffered the evil with which sin is threatened in the law, or the penalty and curse of the law, or that which is equivalent. To suffer for sin, and for the sinner, is so far to take place of the sinner, as to suffer the evil which he deserves, and which otherwise the sinner must have suffered. Or, which is the same, the sufferings of Christ answer the same end with respect to law and divine government, that otherwise must be answered by the eternal destruction of the sinner.”²

“The sufferings of Christ were, therefore, for sin, and consequently must be the evil which sin deserves, and that to which the sinner was exposed, and which he must have suffered had not Christ suffered it in his stead, or that which is equivalent.”³

There is something fruitful of inference in such oft-repeated implications as : “The threatening and penalty of the law,” are not “disregarded and set aside so as to pass wholly unexecuted, in order to pardon and favor the transgressor, without any vicarious sufferings of another in his stead.” The *sufferings* of our Lord are in the *stead* of the *penalty* threatened to the transgressor, and thus the threatening and penalty are not *wholly* disregarded and set aside.⁴

3. Dr. Hopkins defines the atonement as consisting merely in the sufferings and death of Christ. Here he agrees with the elder Edwards,⁵ and also with the younger Edwards, Smalley, Emmons, Griffin, and a majority of the Edwardean divines. He writes :—

¹ Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. p. 345.

² *Ib.* Vol. I. p. 327, 328.

³ *Ib.* Vol. I. p. 328.

⁴ *Ib.* Vol. I. p. 361.

⁵ See I. 5, 6, pp. xviii, xix. above.

"On the whole, the Scripture represents the atonement which Christ has made, by which sinners are delivered from the curse of the law, — the wrath to come, — to consist wholly in his suffering unto death for their sins, by which he suffered the evil which the law threatens for sin, or a complete equivalent, so as fully to answer the end of the threatening of the law, and all the purposes of moral government, consistent with the pardon of the sinner, as much as if the curse had been executed on the transgressor; and that this was one great, and the most important, essential, and difficult part of the work of the Redeemer, and really implies the whole."¹

"The obedience of Christ, though most excellent and meritorious, is not an atonement for the sins of men, or really any part of it. It is impossible that any mere obedience, however excellent and meritorious, should make atonement for the least sin. This can be done by nothing but suffering the penalty of the law, the evil with which transgression is threatened, as has been shown, while attending to the sufferings of Christ."²

4. Dr. Hopkins agrees with his teacher Edwards, and indeed with many of the elder Calvinists, in his analysis of the nature of the pain which our Redeemer suffered, and which constituted what is termed the penalty for our sin. How can *such* sufferings be the *literal* and *moral* penalty of the law? Compare Hopkins, Vol. I. pp. 331, 337–340, with the quotations from Edwards under I. 7. c. 2, 3, pp. xxvi–xxviii. above.

"The displeasure and wrath of God against sinners was the cause of all his [Christ's] sufferings." "The comfortable and happifying sense of the love and favor of God was withdrawn, and the human soul was filled with the most dreadful gloom, distress, and horror, in a most keen sense of the anger and wrath of God, not against himself personally, but with those whom he loved, and [who] were, in a sense, one with him; so that their evil was his evil, and it even necessarily came on him. In this sense he suffered the displeasure and wrath of God."³

5. Dr. Hopkins insists, that the atonement of our Lord leaves all sinners as ill-deserving as it finds them. Although he speaks of Christ, *in the general sense*, as enduring all the punishment which we deserve, yet he does not speak of Christ as enduring any punishment *in such a sense* as to mitigate our demerit in the slightest degree. The Edwardean argument is plain even to the child: If an offender has borne in his per-

¹ Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. p. 328.

² Ib. Vol. I. p. 347

³ Ib. Vol. I. p. 339.

son all the punishment which he deserves, then he deserves no more. If he has borne, in his Surety, all this punishment, then he deserves no more. If then all the punishment which he deserves, and all which the law threatens, has been literally endured on the cross, the sinner cannot be justly punished any more, he is no longer guilty, or ill-deserving. If he be ill-deserving, then his literal penalty has not been endured. Dr. Hopkins felt the force of this argument. He suggested the mode of treating it. He writes:—

“The sufferings of Christ do not alter the character of the sinner in the least. His ill desert is according to his whole moral character, — according to what he is, and has done, as a moral agent. He may justly be treated according to this; and to treat him thus would be doing him no injury. Therefore, not to treat him according to his moral character, but to treat him better and more favorably, is mere grace and undeserved favor. The sufferings of Christ, therefore, do not make the least alteration, or any abatement, of his ill desert, as the sinner’s own character is not hereby made better.

“If the sinner were to suffer the penalty himself, in his own person, and were able to do this and survive his suffering, this would alter his moral character, as he would then have completely compensated for his crime, it being extinguished by his suffering all the evil which it deserves; no more could be required, or justly inflicted upon him. His whole character being considered, his crimes and sufferings, he would stand right in law, and have no need of a pardon, and there would be no grace in not punishing him yet more. The vicarious sufferings of a substitute are quite different and opposite, in this respect, to the sufferings of the sinner, which have been supposed, though really impossible. For, in the case of vicarious sufferings, the sinner’s character remains the same, and he continues as ill-deserving as ever, and must feel so, if his discerning and feeling be according to truth. Had Adam persevered in obedience to the end of the time of his trial, by his vicarious obedience all his children would have been admitted to the enjoyment of the favor of God and eternal life. But this vicarious obedience of their substitute would not have rendered them in the least degree more deserving of such favor than if there had been no such obedience; for Adam’s obedience was not their own personal obedience, and never could be, and, therefore, could not be considered as such. So the sufferings of Christ, not being the sufferings of the sinner but of a substitute, cannot render the sinner less ill-deserving in himself, or personally considered, more than the vicarious obedience of a substitute can render those for whom he obeys more worthy of reward.”¹

¹ Hopkins’s Works, Vol. I. pp. 342, 343. See also pp. 361, 362.

6. Dr. Hopkins follows the elder Edwards in teaching that, although the atonement consists in the sufferings and death of our Lord, yet the righteousness of Christ, his entire work in our behalf, includes his perfect obedience to the *precepts*, as well as his endurance of the *penalty* of the law.

"The atonement made by Christ, in his suffering the penalty of the law, has respect only to the threatening of the law, that by suffering what was threatened, and what sin deserves, sinners who believe in him might be delivered from the curse. Thus Christ died for sin, was sacrificed or offered to bear the sins of many, and he shed his blood for the remission of sins, as the Scripture asserts. This atonement, therefore, only delivers from the curse of the law, and procures the remission of their sins who believe in him, but does not procure for them any positive good; it leaves them under the power of sin, and without any title to eternal life, or any positive favor or actual fitness or capacity to enjoy positive happiness. This would be but a very partial redemption had the Redeemer done no more than merely to make atonement for sin, by suffering the penalty of the law for sinners, and in their stead. It was, therefore, necessary that he should obey the precepts of the law for man, and in his stead; that by his perfect and meritorious obedience he might honor the law in the preceptive part of it, and obtain all the positive favor and benefits which man needed, be they ever so many and great."¹

7. Dr. Hopkins opens the richest vein of thought by the manner in which he describes the efficacy of our Lord's obedience. He describes it by *intimations* which are significant of deep truth. He indeed affirms, that our Lord was not obligated, either in his human nature or in his divine, to render obedience to the law; but it is a *peculiar kind* of obedience to which Hopkins refers. Even if all moral agents, our Redeemer included, are originally bound to obey the moral law, yet the *Divine* Redeemer was not originally bound to obey as a *subject*. Hopkins intimates, we could wish that he had drawn out at length, the distinction between our Lord's *holiness* and his *obedience*; between his obeying as a *man* and his obeying as a *servant*; between his love to the great rule of right, and his exercise of this love in *taking upon himself* the form of a *servile man*. We read:—

"The Son of God, united to the human nature, and considered as God and man in

¹ Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. p. 345; see also pp. 346, 347, 348.

one person, was not under any original obligation to that obedience which he voluntarily took upon himself to perform. This divine person was above any obligation to obedience as a subject and servant. He was, in the human nature, perfectly holy, as God is holy; but this he might be, and continue so forever, and yet not be under obligation to yield the obedience to which he submitted. The Son of God did not take upon him the form of a servant merely by becoming man, — by being made flesh and taking the human nature into a personal union. But, as he became flesh and was made in the likeness of men, that hereby he might be capable of obeying and suffering in the human nature, he voluntarily took upon himself the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death.”¹

“But the Son of God, as has been observed, was under no obligation to obey as he did, as a subject and servant; he owed nothing of this nature for himself, he being above all law in this respect, until he voluntarily took upon him the form of a servant and put himself under the law, not only to suffer the penalty of it, not for himself, but for others, but to obey it not for himself, as if he owed such obedience, but for others, that they might have the benefit of it. In this respect the obedience of the Redeemer was in the highest sense and degree worthy of reward, and meritorious for himself and those for whom he obeyed. All the glory, which is the consequence of his obedience and sufferings, and all the positive good to himself and his church, is the reward of the Redeemer and of the redeemed with him.”²

8. Dr. Hopkins insisted on the necessity of Christ’s obedience, to the validity of his sufferings. We do not mean to imply, that either here or elsewhere, either Hopkins or Bellamy or Edwards originated any theory which had not been previously known (see page ix. of this Essay); but Hopkins explained more clearly than any of his predecessors, except Turretin, the *necessary and intimate connection*, as well as the broad distinction, between the obedience and the sufferings of Christ, in their reference to our eternal life. He maintained, that the obedience was a *suffering* obedience, and the sufferings were *obedient* sufferings; that the *obedience* was necessary to the justness or the efficacy of the sufferings, and that the *sufferings* were the dispensations in which the obedience was chiefly useful. A majority of the Edwardians maintain, that Christ’s obedience was *indispensably necessary* to his atonement, but his atonement *consisted in* his mere sufferings; and Hopkins teaches that unless Christ had

¹ Hopkins’s Works, Vol. I. p. 344.

² Ibid. p. 346.

obeyed in suffering, his agonies could not have satisfied the *legal* demands for punishment, and unless he had *suffered* in obeying, his obedience would not have possessed its present value. He differs from the Edwardians in his *style* of asserting, that Christ's agonies were the satisfaction of the *penal*, and his obedience was the satisfaction of the *preceptive*, demands of the law. He writes :—

“ Christ did, indeed, obey in suffering ; and this was, perhaps, the highest act or instance of his obedience.” “ And this was, therefore, the most pleasing to God, and the most meritorious part of his obedience, when he ‘ became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ; ’ as it was also the greatest instance of his suffering, in which the atonement which he made by suffering chiefly consisted. And it was necessary that his suffering should be voluntary, and so an act of obedience as far as he was active, in order to his suffering justly, and making any atonement thereby. But though the Redeemer obeyed in suffering, and suffered in obeying, and his highest and most meritorious obedience was acted out in his voluntary suffering unto death, and in this greatest instance of his suffering, the atonement which he made for sin chiefly consisted ; yet his obedience and suffering are two perfectly distinct things, and answered different ends, and must be considered so, and the distinction and difference carefully and with clearness kept up in the mind, in order to have a proper understanding of this very important subject. The sufferings of Christ, as such, made atonement for sin, as he suffered the penalty of the law, or the curse of it, the evil threatened to transgression, and which is the desert of it, in the sinner's stead, by which he opened the way for sinners' being delivered from the curse, and laid the foundation for reconciliation between God and the transgressors, by his not imputing but pardoning their sins who believe in the Redeemer and approve of his character and conduct. By the obedience of Christ, all the positive good, all those favors and blessings are merited and obtained which sinners need, in order to enjoy complete and eternal redemption or everlasting life in the kingdom of God.”¹

“ The righteousness of Christ does most properly consist in his obedience, by which believers in him obtain eternal life, and all positive blessings ; yet as his obedience implies his sufferings, and his sufferings imply his obedience, and one is as necessary for the salvation of men as the other, they are both included in his righteousness, as they are both necessarily included in his obedience unto death.”²

9. In his *explanations* and *illustrations* of the Redeemer's work for man, Dr. Hopkins often adopts the very language which, since his day, has become the standard phraseology of New England divines. He (as well

¹ Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. pp. 347, 348.

² *Ibid.* p. 349.

as Bellamy, see II. 2, pp. xliii.-xlv. above) has done much to recommend the style in which his successors have developed the great office of the Redeemer. He often speaks of the sufferings and death of Christ as *removing the obstacles to our salvation*, and as making it *consistent with the honor* of the just lawgiver to pardon us.

"This otherwise insuperable difficulty, this mighty bar and obstacle in the way of showing any favor to man, and escaping eternal destruction, is the ground of the necessity of a Mediator and Redeemer, by whom it may be wholly removed, and man be delivered from the curse of the law, and saved, consistent with the divine character, with truth, infinite rectitude, wisdom, and goodness; and so as not to set aside and dishonor, but support and maintain, the divine law and government."¹

"Thus by the death, the blood of Christ, full atonement is made for sin; the curse of the law is executed on the Redeemer, by which he has bought, redeemed his people from the curse, and opened the way for their pardon and complete redemption. He has been made a curse, that he might deliver all who believe in him from the curse, but not so as in the least degree to remove their unworthiness and ill desert, but this remains, and will remain for ever; it being improper, undesirable, and impossible that this should be removed, or that they should ever cease to deserve eternal destruction. They remain, and must continue to be as criminal as ever they were, so long as it remains true, that they have been guilty of crimes which are pardoned, and from which they are justified by the blood of Christ."²

When we consider that Hopkins describes the active obedience of Christ as a *self-denying*, a *humiliating* obedience, and thus virtually brings it into the category of sufferings; and describes even this obedience, as possessing its chief worth in the consent to endure the agonies of the cross; and represents these agonies, as constituting the atonement because they make our salvation consistent with the honor of God's attributes, and because they maintain the honor of his government, we must allow, that even if Hopkins did not enter the inmost court of the Edwardean theology, he still opened the door of it, and looked into it with an approving smile. This fact seems yet more obvious, when we consider, that while he describes the obedience of Christ as satisfying the

¹ Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. p. 322.

² Vol. I. p. 328. See further explanations and illustrations of the sufferings and death of Christ in Vol. I. pp. 329, 330, 483, 484, 485.

preceptive demands of the law, and as imputed to us, he is yet careful to define the word "*imputed*," and to add the expegetical phrase, "or avails to procure" eternal blessedness for us. He says :—

"All which favors they [the elect] receive by the obedience and merit or righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to them, or avails to procure all these benefits for them, in consequence of their union to him by faith."¹

"What the Redeemer has done and suffered is imputed to him [the believer]; that is, is reckoned in his favor, so that he has the benefit of it, as much as if it were his own; and it avails to obtain deliverance from the curse of the law, for him, and eternal life; but it leaves him as unworthy of any favor, as deserving of eternal destruction, and as great a criminal as he ever was."²

Not only does Hopkins thus define his terms in agreement with the Edwardean theory, but *in general* he is not fond of affirming that the obedience of Christ gains our salvation by being transferred and imputed to us as our own obedience; but he is more disposed to represent it as gaining our salvation by *honoring* the law, and by *deserving* the reward which consists in the blessedness of his elect.

"The work of the Redeemer consists, in part, in his perfect obedience to the law of God. This is an essential part of the character and work of the Redeemer of man; for he could not directly honor the precepts of the law in any way, or by any thing, but by obeying them; and the least instance of disobedience or disregard to any one of them would have ruined his character as the Redeemer of man."³

"It was, therefore, necessary that he should obey the precepts of the law for man, and in his stead; that by his perfect and meritorious obedience he might honor the law in the preceptive part of it, and obtain all the positive favor and benefits which man needed, be they ever so many and great."⁴

"It may be truly said that the obedience of Christ to the divine law had more excellence and worth in it than the highest, most perfect, and all possible obedience of all the mere creatures in the universe; and the law of God is unspeakably more dignified and honored in the precepts of it, by the former, than it can be by the latter."⁵

"In the justification of the believer by the righteousness of Christ, it does not become his righteousness, so as that he is considered as having actually done and suffered, in his own person, what Christ did and suffered; for this is in no sense true,

¹ Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. p. 348.

² Ib. p. 362.

³ Ib. p. 344.

⁴ Ib. p. 345.

⁵ Ib. p. 346.

and cannot be made true. But he, being in Christ, united to him by faith, the righteousness of Christ, what he has done and suffered for sinners, and in their place and stead, avails for the believer's justification, and he has as much advantage by it in this respect, as if it were his own personal righteousness. It would be needless to mention this particular, if some had not entertained this notion of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, and represented it in this very absurd light; and drawn consequences from it, most contrary to the truth and many expressed declarations of Scripture."¹

In the following illustration, we detect germs of the Edwardean theory of Christ's imputed righteousness. There is a remarkable correspondence between this illustration and the excerpts from President Edwards in I. 7, b. c. pp. xxii-xxv of this Essay. It explains Dr. Hopkins's theory of Imputation, and proves it to be *essentially* like that of West, Smalley, and Dwight.

"It is agreeable to reason and common sense that one person should have favor shown to him out of respect to the merit and worthiness of another, purely on the account of the relation the former bears to the latter, who has no worthiness of such favor in himself, and to whom it would be improper to show such favor were it not for his relation to such a worthy person, by which he is, in some sense, united to him. This is really imputing the merit of one person to another—to recommend him to favor who has no worthiness in himself. Thus, if we have a friend who is very dear to us, and has great merit and worthiness with us, and we see a child in wretched circumstances, starving and naked, when we are informed that he is the son of our friend, we shall be disposed to show him kindness and give him relief, feed and clothe him, for the sake of his father, out of regard to his merit in our eyes. Or, if such a worthy person, who has great merit, have a friend who loves him, though he may have no worthiness in himself, and has offended us, yet, if he come recommended by this worthy friend of ours, desiring that we would forgive him and show him all the kindness he wants, we shall readily do it, wholly for the sake of the worthiness of our friend, though otherwise it would be improper, and we should be disposed to treat him with neglect and contempt; and this appears congruous and rational."²

10. Dr. Hopkins favors the doctrine of the General Atonement. That he did not regard this doctrine as essentially wrong, might be inferred from the unqualified commendation which he bestowed upon Bellamy's True

¹ Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. pp. 477, 478.

² *Ib.* p. 481.

Religion Delineated, a treatise which is both explicit and emphatic in asserting that the atonement was designed for all men.¹ Dr. Hopkins admits that "all sinners under the gospel are 'really put into a capacity for obtaining salvation,' and that whether they desire and accept of this salvation or not; it being freely offered to their choice and acceptance. In this sense it is made possible to all; and their constantly neglecting and refusing to desire and endeavor to become partakers of it does not alter the case with respect to this."² Here it is implied that the salvation of the non-elect, of those who persevered in refusing what they might have chosen, was made *possible* to them. It was made possible by the atonement; if actually made so, it was designed to be made so; then the atonement was designed for the non-elect. This is the essence of the doctrine of general atonement. In Chapter xii. Section 1, of his System of Divinity, Hopkins draws a distinction between Christ's being "substituted to obey and suffer for man," and man's being "actually interested in the benefit of his atonement and righteousness;" between "the foundation for a treaty with mankind," and the *prosecution* of this treaty, in which prosecution "redemption is actually applied not to all mankind, but to those who cordially embrace the offer." These and similar remarks imply that God intended not only to save the elect by the atonement, but also to make the salvation of the non-elect *possible*. The context shows that this was the meaning of Dr. Hopkins, when he affirms:—

"The Redeemer has made an atonement sufficient to expiate for the sins of the whole world, and, in this sense, has tasted death for every man, has taken away the sin of the world, has given himself a ransom for all, and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, so that *whosoever* believeth in him may be saved, and God can now be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."³

11. Dr. Hopkins habitually exalts the sovereignty of God in applying the atonement to the regeneration of sinners. He does not represent the Most High as under an obligation in distributive justice to regenerate

¹ See pp. xlv - xlvii. of this Essay.

² Hopkins's Works, Vol. III. p. 212.

³ Ib. Vol. I. p. 365.

men, because their punishment has been borne already, and their active obedience has been rendered already to every jot and tittle of the law, and all their debt, even to the uttermost farthing, has been paid by their Substitute ; but he is singularly careful to represent the mercy of God as “in the highest degree *sovereign mercy*,” not barely in providing the atonement, but also in renewing the soul, after the atonement has been provided.

“And God has not obliged himself by any promise to grant this mercy to any individual person, antecedent to his actually doing it.”¹ “In the work of regeneration, by which men are born of the Spirit, God acts as a sovereign.” “The sovereignty of God consists in his being above all obligation to his creatures, and so, infinitely above any direction, influence, or control from them in any thing he does. In this sense, God is an infinite Sovereign ; he does just as he pleases, not being influenced by any obligation he is under to any one, any further than he has been pleased to oblige himself by promise, or some other way. Sovereignty is, therefore, in a peculiar manner, essential to all acts of grace, or grace in all cases is sovereign grace, and what is not so is no grace at all.”²

The fact that Hopkins's Works abound with such remarks as these, is not in itself sufficient proof that he rejected the theory of a literal payment of our debt, a literal purchase of our souls ; but this proof is found in the fact that he *did* make *these* remarks, and did *not* make certain *other* remarks antagonistic to them. He never says, with Martin Luther, that Christ became “the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, blasphemer, that ever was, or could be in the world,” because he *received* all our sins, they were all *laid* upon him, that he may pay and satisfy for all.³ He does not say with the excellent Rutherford : “I was condemned, I was judged, I was crucified for sin, when my Surety, Christ, was condemned, judged, and crucified for my sins. I have paid all, because my Surety has paid all.”⁴ But Hopkins habitually represents the sinner, as lying under a penal debt still unpaid, and as depending on

¹ Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. p. 373.

² Ib. Vol. III. pp. 565, 566.

³ See Luther on Galatians, Chap. III.

⁴ Trial and Triumph of Faith, Sermon xix.

the naked pleasure of a Sovereign whether or not he shall be compelled to pay it.

Before leaving this great triumvirate of the New England theologians, we append three remarks:—

First, these three intimate friends were in *substantial* agreement with each other in regard to the doctrine of the atonement. This is evident from their writings. They obviously regarded themselves as coinciding on the substance of the doctrine. Hopkins was better prepared than any other man to interpret the writings of his teacher. He was the companion in whom Edwards confided more than in any other man, and it was Hopkins who first published some of President Edwards's most decisive statements on the Atonement. It was he who copied in his own fair hand, and first gave to the public, Edwards's Sermon on the "Wisdom of God as displayed in the Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ." Hopkins also commended in the highest terms Edwards's Discourse on "Justification by Faith alone:" see Life of Edwards, pp. 90, 91; first edition,—and Hopkins often refers to this Discourse with decided approbation, as in Works, Vol. I. pp. 438, 445, 472, 476 et al. Bellamy mentions the same discourse with uniform respect, as in his Works, Vol. I. pp. 55, 395, 397 et al. Edwards also has highly commended Bellamy's "True Religion Delineated," the Treatise which exhibits more distinctly than any other, Bellamy's theory of the Atonement, and of the General Atonement: see Edwards's Preface to that Treatise in Bellamy's Works, Vol. I. p. 3–6. The Treatise of Bellamy was read to Hopkins, and approved by him before its publication, and was often quoted by him confidently afterward. It is well known that Bellamy, in his turn, adopted and admired the general principles of Hopkins, and received from him as much influence as he exerted over him.

Secondly, the three friends, Edwards, Bellamy, and Hopkins, are in *essential* agreement with the doctrine which has been adopted by the school of the younger Edwards. The spirit and aim of this school coincide with the general spirit and aim of that great triumvirate, in regard to the *essential* parts of the doctrine of the atonement. This school did not regard themselves as doing any thing more than carrying out to their consistent results certain principles taught by their three illustrious pre-

decessors. As Hopkins was the confidential friend of the elder Edwards, so was he of the younger. He submitted his System of Theology to Dr. Edwards for critical examination, before the System was published, and after its publication he solicited renewed criticisms from the same friend. But Dr. Edwards in his remarkable letter to Hopkins, while he condemned freely certain minor peculiarities of the System, made no serious objection to Hopkins's view of the Atonement: see Memoir of Hopkins prefixed to his Works, pp. 204–207. Dr. Hopkins *began* his System of Theology in 1781. Dr. Edwards published his celebrated Discourses on the Atonement in 1785. Hopkins *published* his System in 1793, eight years after the Discourses of Edwards had appeared. If he had disliked the substance of those Discourses, he would have expressed his disapproval. Throughout the correspondence of Hopkins after the publication of the Discourses of Dr. Edwards, there is not one word which implies any radical opposition to any of Dr. Edwards's principles. It is known that he retained to the last his hearty confidence in the author of those Discourses, and that he regarded them as substantially correct. It is known also that Dr. Edwards regarded Dr. Hopkins as agreeing with the substance of the doctrine taught by West, Edwards, and Smalley. The first of Smalley's discourses was published eight years, the second, seven years, before Hopkins published his System; but Hopkins, faithful as he was in resisting error, did not manifest in his System or in his correspondence any distrust of Smalley, the pupil of Bellamy. Indeed it has been surmised that while Hopkins exerted a decided influence on Drs. West, Edwards, and Smalley, he yet received an influence from them, and modified his phraseology somewhat, in consonance with their style. They expressed in plainer language than he had done, the truths involved in certain principles which he had taught them. From the intimacy of Dr. Hopkins with President Edwards and Dr. Bellamy on the one hand, and with Drs. Edwards, Smalley, Spring, West, and Emmons on the other, he becomes an invaluable witness to the *essential* coincidence between the school of the elder Edwards and the school of the younger Edwards, in regard to the atonement. He laid his hands upon both schools and blessed them both. Both of the schools laid their hands upon his head; the one in paternal affection, the other in filial reverence, and gave him their benediction. The peculiar relations of Hopkins to

the elder and the younger divines of New England, make him in some respects the most important of all our theologians.

Thirdly, while Edwards, Bellamy, and Hopkins are in *substantial* agreement with the school of the younger Edwards, they differed from that school in some particulars, as indeed they differed from each other in some points, and each of the three differed from himself at some times. Each of the three made statements which the other two did not exactly approve, although neither of them regarded the others as essentially at variance with himself. They were independent thinkers, and each of them aimed to be right and true, rather than to make all his new assertions coincide with all his old ones. Many of the elder Edwards's most noted words on the atonement he wrote at the age of thirty and thirty-two years. Hopkins, referring to some of Edwards's discourses, remarks: they "were penned more than twenty years before his death; in which space of time he made swift and amazing advances in divine knowledge, in branches almost numberless."¹ And again, Hopkins observes of the President's unpublished manuscripts: "there might be a number of volumes published from [them], which would afford a great deal of new light and entertainment to the church of Christ."² Some of this *new light* is seen in Edwards's Miscellaneous Observations "Concerning the Necessity and Reasonableness of the Christian Doctrine of Satisfaction for Sin;" "observations" which both Dr. Hopkins and Dr. Edwards engaged in preparing for the press. The germs of the Edwardsian theory of the atonement are strewn more thickly among these Observations than they are in the earlier Discourses of Edwards. They are still more numerous in Bellamy, and most of all in Hopkins. The fact that every noted advocate of the Old Calvinism differed occasionally from himself, was one cause which prompted the younger Edwards to reëxamine the whole subject of the atonement; and hence the general system of theology which he embraced, has sometimes been distinguished by the name, Consistent Calvinism.³

It is known that Dr. Hopkins regarded the writings of President Edwards as containing a few errors, and he ascribed them to the fact

¹ Life and Sermons of Edwards. First edition, p. 143.

² Ib. p. 88.

³ See p. ix. of this Essay.

that "some things were taken for granted as true, because they had appeared in the earlier writings of divines, and in creeds. They were admitted as first principles, which, as to correctness, required no examination."¹ Both Dr. Smalley and Dr. Emmons in their Discourses on the Atonement quote and condemn certain expressions of President Edwards; still, both of these divines cherished the deepest reverence for the President, as essentially accurate, though, in some particulars, erroneous; and Dr. Smalley goes so far as to affirm, after citing Edwards and Hooker, as representatives of the elder Calvinists: "I dare say, the venerable divines above quoted, did not mean so, neither did their hearts think so. They never prayed as though those things were true; they never felt as if they believed them."² The New England divines have been magnanimous enough to own, that there may be important differences in speculation among men who maintain the essentials of the same faith. They have contended against some theories of the Old Calvinism, but have still claimed to be substantial Calvinists, and have in fact been the most self-consistent of all Calvinists.

IV. The fourth name which we shall mention in the catalogue of those who have suggested the Edwardean theory of the atonement, is that of Stephen West, one of the original trustees, and the first Vice-President of Williams College; a divine who advanced many of the principles afterwards elucidated by his successor, President Griffin; and whose Treatise reappears in various parts of the Discourse of President Maxcy. Dr. West is the first of those divines who are familiarly called the "*successors* (Bellamy and Hopkins being the intimate *contemporaries*) of Edwards." West immediately followed the elder Edwards, as pastor of the church at Stockbridge, Massachusetts. He was the cherished and confidential companion of Bellamy and Hopkins, and through them became thoroughly versed in the peculiarities of their theological instructor. He was also intimate with Dr. Edwards, Dr.

¹ Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. Memoir, p. 50.

² Smalley's Sermons on the Atonement, p. 62.

Smalley, and Dr. Emmons, and is thus a connecting link between these divines and the triumvirate whom they all revered. He published his "Essay on the Scripture Doctrine of Atonement," in 1785. Its preface was dated April 14th, 1785. It was finished therefore about six months before the delivery of Dr. Edwards's celebrated sermons on the atonement. It is, in some respects, the most beautifully scientific of all the early Edwardean treatises on this theme. If it had developed more fully the idea, that the death of Christ was designed to maintain the authority of God's law, and exhibit the firmness of God's purpose to punish all men who are not *in* their Redeemer, it would merit the honor of being the first and the best treatise which introduced the Edwardean theory. A second edition of West's Essay was published in 1815, with an Appendix of seventy pages. In these pages the author reiterates and defends the statements of the original Essay. It is doubtful whether, on the whole, this Appendix discloses any new influence which the mind of Dr. Edwards had exerted on Dr. West, during the thirty years which had elapsed since the first publication of the Essay. We doubt not, that the son of President Edwards had communicated various and important suggestions to West, even before the first draught of West's volume. The influence of the two friends was probably reciprocal. How could it have been otherwise, circumstanced as they were? From the fact that West was born, was graduated at college, was ordained as a minister, just ten years before Dr. Edwards, and that he published his Essay before Edwards preached his three Discourses, and that he was fitted, by his native endowment and by his early culture to wield an uncommon power over his younger friend, we may rank him as one of the four divines who aided Edwards in his statement of the Edwardean theory. Indeed, there is more evidence that Dr. West was guided by his spiritual father Hopkins, than that he was guided by his junior companion Edwards. He was interlaced with them both; but in the confidential intercourse of forty-five years, the reverential pupil must, one would think, have received the more important aid from his devout instructor. It is true that Dr. West dated the Preface to his Essay eight years before Hopkins dated the Preface to his "System," and that Hopkins in his System does not exhibit any marked partiality for the peculiar style of West. Still, it is known that Hopkins regarded Dr.

West as agreeing substantially with himself, and to his dying day manifested more confidence in him than in any other of his followers. But whatever may have been the obligations of West to his senior teacher, or to his junior friend, he was like every other one of the early Edwardean school, a truly independent thinker, and his Essay bears internal marks of having been wrought out, in the main, by his own mind, rather than compiled from the teachings of his associates. His ingenious theory is expressed in his own peculiar, neat, chaste style. The leading principle of his Essay is, that of the elder Edwards, — that God loves to reveal his own character, — a principle lying at the basis of the atonement, and of the correlate truths. Some of the more important particulars in the Essay, are the following: —

1. The aim of the Creator in all his works is, to manifest his attributes. "A display or manifestation of his own true and infinitely holy character, was the chief and ultimate end which God had in view in creation."¹ The moral law is "*a transcript of the divine perfections,*" and "all God's government" is designed to unfold "his own true character, and exhibit a genuine picture of it to the world."² "Accordingly, we may forever expect to see his mind written, and his character as indubitably expressed, in what he *does*, as in what he *says*, in the government which he *exercises*, as in the law which he *has given*."³

2. Therefore, the design of the penalties of the law is, to exhibit the attributes of God. As all God's works are called a "*picture*" of his character, so the punishment which he inflicts is termed a "*glass*" reflecting his attributes. "And were it not a glass in which God's infinite hatred of sin is seen, it never would be inflicted."⁴ "Pain and distress have no moral virtue in them; and are of no importance, otherwise than as *means* through which the beauty of the divine character, and the true disposition of the divine mind, may be seen by his creatures." "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the *sufferings of the sinner*, in no other way than as they serve to exhibit the righteous character of God, and prove him to be a hater of iniquity."⁵

¹ West's Essay, pp. 7, 10, 11.

³ Ib. p. 12.

⁵ Ib. pp. 23, 25, 66, 88, 112, 114, 150, 153.

² Ib. p. 12.

⁴ Ib. p. 24.

3. Accordingly, the design of the atonement is to manifest the attributes of God. "The original design of God, in the creation of the world, will naturally lead us to suppose that a disposition to exhibit his character in its true colors, was the cause of his requiring an atonement for sin, before he would exercise pardoning mercy." "Of course, therefore, the true reason why God required an atonement for sin was, that *the real disposition of his own infinite mind, toward such an object, might appear ; even though he pardoned and saved the sinner.*"¹ As the penalty of the law is termed a "glass," reflecting the divine attributes, so we read of the atonement : "No glass had ever yet been held up before men, in which the divine wrath might be so clearly seen."²

4. The design of the atonement is to manifest the same attributes which would otherwise have been manifested in the punishment of sin. "Whenever God's just and real displeasure against sin is exhibited in some other way, to equal advantage as it would be in the final destruction of the sinner, atonement is then made for his sins, and a door open for the exercise of pardoning mercy."³ The design of punishment is to *delineate* the hatred which God feels toward sin—to give a "*clear and sensible manifestation* of his displeasure against the *sinner.*" This abhorrence could not be *pictured out*, "were mercy exercised toward sinners, unless some *peculiar methods* had been adopted in divine providence, whereby God might sensibly exhibit his infinite hatred of iniquity ; and *that too* as a necessary step toward the exercise of pardoning mercy."⁴ "The death and sufferings of Christ are a glass in which we may behold the feelings of the divine mind toward sinners, and read an abhorrence of their characters ; a displeasure against them, which eternal destruction would no more than fully express."⁵ "*It is the visibility of the just displeasure of the holy God against offenders* that renders punishments useful, and promotes the honor and security of the divine government." "*Not the sufferings of the sinner* do this, but the character, the just anger of God appearing *in them.* In whatever way this holy displeasure of God against the sinner becomes visible, the ends of government,

¹ West's Essay, pp. 15, 16, 20, 21, 29, 30, 38, &c.

³ Ib. p. 29.

⁵ Ib. p. 119.

² Ib. p. 140.

⁴ Ib. p. 40.

for aught we can see, are answered.”¹ “The same character, the same disposition of the Deity, which would have appeared in the death of the sinner, was designed to be exhibited in *the death of Christ*.”²

5. The atonement, then, honors the law as much as the infliction of the legal penalties would have honored it. For the atonement *expresses* exactly the same divine attributes as are expressed in the penalties of the law, and therefore honors the law by accomplishing its great end. “In all the respects, in which the divine law is useful and important as a rule of government, it is honored and magnified *even in the salvation of sinners* through the atonement.”³ “The death of the sinner is a glass in which we see the righteousness, the punitive justice of God ; so, also, is the death of Christ. In the former, we have a view of righteousness as it relates to the execution of punishment ; so, also, in the latter.”⁴ “When this abhorrence of the Divine mind is made as fully visible in its natural fruits, as though the curse had been literally executed on the offender, and it is made evidently to appear to be *the divine abhorrence of the character of the pardoned sinner*, in whatever way this be done, the authority of the law is maintained, and the spirit and import of it supported in government.”⁵ “If the written law is expressive of an anger in God against sinners, which, in its natural operation would bring eternal punishment upon them ; it is obvious that the spirit of the law cannot be preserved in government, unless this anger be, in some sensible way, exhibited to the views of creatures ; and consequently, that it would be inconsistent with the character of God to pardon sinners without an atonement, and such an one as should exhibit this anger, and in which it should appear to burn against sinners.”⁶ Thus the atonement exhibits what the law exhibits ; and therefore if the design of the atonement be good, the design of the law is good ; and if the law be not carried out in its penal inflictions, it is yet honored, *for* its design is accomplished, its main spirit is fulfilled in the atonement, which is a substitute for legal penalty, “a sensible exhibition of that divine wrath which is threatened in the law ;”⁷ “such a testimony of divine displeasure

¹ West's Essay, p. 175.

² Ib. p. 176.

³ Ib. pp. 174, 175.

⁷ Ib. p. 37.

² Ib. pp. 33, 35, 37, 63.

⁴ Ib. pp. 64, 65.

⁶ Ib. p. 154.

against him [*the sinner*], as honors the law of God, and establishes its authority to the same degree, that the execution of its penalty would have done."¹

6. Therefore the atonement may be defined: "*that* which magnifies the broken law of God, and does it the same honor, which would have been done by the execution of its penalty whenever it be incurred."²

"By atonement is meant a manifestation of that just and righteous anger of God, which the sinner deserves, in some other way than in his punishment."³ "Respecting atonement, it is to be observed that it summarily consists in an exhibition of the righteous displeasure of God against sin, made in some other way than in the punishment of the sinner. The real abhorrence in which God holds the character of the sinner, would be no more than truly and fully expressed in his eternal punishment. It is of the utmost importance that this disposition of the divine mind should appear in the government of God; because this is his glory. Without this infinite purity and hatred of iniquity, he could not be GOD — be absolutely perfect. If divine government can be administered in such a way, without the punishment of the sinner, as properly to delineate this disposition of the divine mind, to the views of his creatures; the divine character will not suffer, by the pardon of the sinner. And in whatever way this disposition of the divine mind be delineated; whether it be in the punishment of the sinner, or in some other mode not less expressive; the ends of divine government, in general, are answered. One great end of the coming and death of *Christ*, was to delineate this disposition of the divine mind, and make a full and sensible exhibition of it. In *his* sufferings and death this divine purity, and hatred of iniquity, were sensibly and gloriously expressed. In the *sufferings* of *Christ* God gives us to see that his own infinite mind is full of displeasure against sinners. *Christ's* sufferings and death are a glass in which that character of God which we read in the threatenings and curses of the law, may become visible and conspicuous. After all that *Christ* has done and suffered, if God pardons and saves the sinner for *his* sake; it will afford us no reason to believe that there is less aversion in the divine mind from the character of the sinner, than the threatenings and curses of the law would naturally suggest. In this way, therefore, the honor of the law is preserved, though the sinner be saved."⁴

Agreeably to these definitions, Dr. West often explains the atonement by phrases which express its great and primary aim. He speaks of it, not as the strict and literal *purchase* of sinners, but as laying a *foundation for mercy to sinners*,⁵ as *paving the way* for *Christ* as Intercessor to ap-

¹ West's Essay, p. 158.

² Ib. p. 158.

³ Ib. p. 178.

⁴ Ib. pp. 117, 118.

⁵ Ib. p. 71.

proach the Father,¹ *preparing the way* for a *consistent* exercise of mercy, &c.² Here we see the connection between Dr. Bellamy, Dr. Hopkins, and Dr. West, see II. 2. pp. xlii-xlv, and III. 9. pp. lvi-lix, of this Essay; also between Dr. West and the younger Edwards, Drs. Smalley, Emmons, Griffin, and Weeks.

7. Hence it appears, that the atonement does not consist in the active obedience, viewed as the holiness, of Christ, but in his sufferings and death. Dr. West did not deny, that the atonement accomplishes various ends, but he insulated from them all, its *main* end. In his definition of the atonement he did not include *all* which the atonement aims to effect, but he individualized *that* which the atonement aims *principally* to effect. As it aims *principally* to manifest God's righteousness in delivering sinners from their righteous punishment, it is defined according to this chief intent, and is described as consisting in that which *carries out* this intent. Therefore Dr. West says:—

“The great end of the coming and death of Christ was not to give evidence of the equity and righteousness of the moral law; but rather to exhibit in its proper colors, the disposition of the divine mind toward us for breaking it.”³

“To suppose that the principal design of the coming of Christ, was to exhibit evidence to the consciences of men, of the righteousness and equity of the divine law, either as a *rule* of government for God, or of conduct for us; for aught we can see, would be rather a reproach, than an honor to the divine character. For this would suppose that the law of God, though originally inscribed in the fullest manner that it could be on the hearts of men, was nevertheless of such a nature and extent that the creature could see neither the propriety of God's governing by it, nor the reason of his own obligation to obey it; and therefore, that the law of God was not originally fitted to discover the true beauties of the divine character.”⁴

“These things being so, it is easy to see that conviction of the righteousness of the law might be wrought in the consciences of men, in a way infinitely less expensive than by the coming and death of the Son of God: yea, were there no other ground of conviction in the case, this remarkable event would be far from affording it. For so long as we judge a rule itself to be *bad*, no *conduct* of any one formed upon it, will make us believe it to be *good*. While we dispute the righteousness of the rule *given*, we dispute the righteousness of him who *gave it*. And in that case, his *obeying it himself* will no more convince us of its equity, than his administering government *over us*, in conformity to it. We may safely conclude, therefore, that to minister conviction to the con-

¹ West's Essay, p. 75.

² Ib. p. 140.

³ Ib. p. 35.

⁴ Ib. p. 36.

sciences of men, of the righteousness of the moral law *as a rule*, was not the principal object in view, in the coming and work of Christ." ¹

"The principal design of the *death of Christ* was not to discover the perfection and strength of his own personal obedience; and to bestow on it a lustre, with which it could not otherwise have shone. It is confessed that this is an end not only worthy of being an object, but which also was very advantageously answered by the death of Christ. Still, it is evident that this was not the only, or even principal object in view, in this great event." ²

"Christ's *obedience* unto death was infinitely pleasing to the Father; and, as hath been before observed, of infinite importance. Without *this*, his *sufferings and death* could have been no atonement for sin. And, for his *obedience unto death* it is that *He* is highly exalted, and hath a name given him which is above every name. (Phil. 2: 8, 9.) Yet the *obedience* of Christ, important and glorious as it was, is never once spoken of as making atonement. Nor are his disciples ever represented as being purged and saved by his *obedience*: but, invariably, by his *blood*, his *sufferings and death*." ³

The coincidence of Dr. West with the majority of the Edwardean divines, on this theme, is too obvious to require comment.

8. As the atonement does not consist in the active obedience, viewed as the holiness, of Christ, so it does not consist in his literally suffering the penalty of the law. The entire theory of Dr. West is founded on the principle, that as this legal penalty is a language expressing God's hatred of sin, so the atonement is a different language, expressing the same fact; ⁴ and the language of the atonement is *substituted* for the language of legal penalty; the atonement is substituted for that precise evil which the law had threatened. Dr. West agrees with Edwards and Hopkins in supposing, "that such *views* of things, such a *sense* of the awful and terrible nature of divine wrath, then crowded in upon him [Christ], and filled his pure and holy mind, as quite overwhelmed him with sorrow." ⁵ "There is nothing absurd in the supposition that God might communicate, to the mind of Christ, a very clear view, and lively sense of his just and infinite displeasure against those whom the man, Jesus, came to save; and as little absurdity in supposing that *this view and sense of the divine anger* should greatly *exercise* the mind of Christ." ⁶

¹ West's Essay, p. 37.

³ Ib. p. 97.

⁵ Ib. p. 82.

Ib. p. 64. See likewise pp. 68-71.

⁴ Ib. Chapter vi.

⁶ Ib. pp. 125-129.

"The principal weight of Christ's sufferings arose from the deep impressions which were made upon his mind, of the awful anger, the sore displeasure of God against sinners."¹ But there is a wide difference between suffering *in view* of the penalties of the law deserved by sinners, and suffering the exact penalties themselves. Accordingly Dr. West says:—

"It is admitted that the law which sentences sinners universally and indiscriminately to a punishment, which will be a proper and adequate expression of the abhorrence in which sin and sinners are universally holden by the divine Lawgiver, is not and cannot be *literally* fulfilled, if any are saved, even though it be through the atonement of Christ. But it is insisted, that in the pardon and salvation of believers *through this atonement*, no disrespect is shown to the law of God, either as being a just estimate of the demerit of sin, or of the divine abhorrence of it. Nor does it, in the least, favor the opinion, that the *divine law* is not the rule agreeably to which his government will be forever administered."²

Dr. West often repeats the remark that, as all the ills of life are expressive of God's anger, so the natural evils which Christ endured express the same; but this accurate writer is peculiarly careful to add, that this anger is against *sinners*. "If, in the sufferings and death of Christ, God expressed any degree of anger whatever, it must have been *against sinners*; because no degree of it existed against Christ."³ It need not be said that there is no literal penalty of the law which does not express the anger, or rather the distributive justice of the lawgiver against the person punished. But Dr. West says "that the anger which burned *in the sufferings of his* [God's] *dear Son*, was not against *him*, but against *sinful men*," and "that the *sufferings of Christ* were, in reality, expressions of divine displeasure *against men for their sins*."⁴

9. The assertion, then, that our Lord suffered punishment, the curse of the law, is to be understood in the *general*, not in the *restricted* sense of the words *punishment* and *curse*. Dr. West asserts:—

"*Natural evils* which express the anger of God, are the *curse* of the law. Natural evils Christ suffered, and those to a high degree. These are all a curse, and the curse

¹ West's Essay, pp. 132–134; also, pp. 75, 81, 99.

³ Ib. p. 102.

² Ib. p. 176.

⁴ Ib. p. 111.

of God ; and evidently represented as the curse of the law. And when we consider the dignity of the person, and the excellency of the character of Christ ; if the natural evils he suffered from the hand of God, were sufficient to express to the views of creatures, as high a degree of divine displeasure, as the natural evils which God brings on the sinner himself, when he executes the curse upon him ; it can be no reflection upon Christ, nor imply the least defect in his character, to consider him as having endured the *curse of the law*, and *in this sense* having been made a curse for his people, that they might be the righteousness of God in him.”¹

Accordingly, Dr. West often speaks of Christ as suffering punishments, which are the curse of law, and he speaks of all our *natural*, although never of our *moral* evils as punishments ; but he does not regard the curse of the law which our Lord suffered as involving “those sensations of despair and those horrors of an accusing conscience, which will necessarily accompany, and be a bitter part of the sufferings of *sinners*, when *they* endure the curse of the law.”² He often distinguishes between the evils, punishments, curse which our Lord endured, and those which the unregenerate will endure ;³ between *punishments* in the general sense, and punishments as the literal *penalties of the law*. These general punishments may be inflicted on the innocent, and are *sufferings*, *natural evils* which are “testimonies of the divine anger against the sins of” the guilty ;⁴ but “the penalties of the law, we are to remember, *express* the *displeasure* of the lawgiver *in the pain and sufferings of the transgressor*.”⁵ The evils we suffer *in this life* are testimonies of God’s righteous displeasure against us ; they are, then, according to Dr. West, *punishments* ; Christ endured *such* punishments. Still, Dr. West believed that God never brings evils *in the literal execution* of the great and original laws of his kingdom, but on those who transgress the law and therefore are sinners.⁶

Therefore we read that “for God to pardon the sinner without an atonement, would be inconsistent with the true spirit and import of his holy law ;”⁷ and “the honor of the divine law, agreeably to the true

¹ West’s Essay, pp. 93, 94.

² Ib. pp. 58, 59, 92, &c.

³ Ib. p. 27.

⁴ Ib. p. 22.

² Ib. p. 93.

⁴ Ib. pp. 111–115.

⁶ Ib. pp. 52, 88.

spirit and import of it, is fully preserved in the government of God, when his displeasure against sin is made to appear, to equal advantage, as it doth in the execution of the penalties of the law; *in whatever way it be done.*"¹ The atonement is not made, then, by executing the literal penalty of the law, but in some other way, equally advantageous to the *honor* of the law, and satisfactory to its main *spirit* and *aim*. Dr. West does indeed assert that "the penalty of the law is really answered, and its demands satisfied, whenever God's hatred of iniquity is as clearly exhibited in acts of government, as it is expressed in the language of the law, *in whatever way this be done.*"² But unless he contradicts himself, he here means that the "penalty of the law" is answered in the grand *design*, in the honor of it, and the "demands" of the law are satisfied in the pre-dominant *spirit*, in the authority of them; not that the "penalty of the law" is as literally and strictly endured, and the "demands" of it are as literally and strictly met, if the transgressor be pardoned, as they would be if the transgressor were punished.³ In this double use, the general and the exact, of the words punishment, curse, &c., Dr. West is often followed by those Edwardeans who believe that our Lord did not satisfy distributive justice, nor the literal demands of the law.⁴

10. Of course, then, the atonement does not impose an obligation on the distributive justice of God, to save any one who has sinned.

"Viewed in this light, it is easy to see that the *atonement* infers no obligation on the *justice* of God, to pardon and save the sinner. The objection is, not that the purposes of grace cannot be answered if the sinner be not saved, when atonement is made for his sins; but, that *atonement* implies an obligation, in *justice*, to save the sinner. But, if *justice* requires the salvation of the sinner, the Governor of the world must be guilty of *injustice* in damning him. To suppose that it would be *unjust*, in God, to damn the sinner, evidently implies that a *just* and *holy* God hath not displeasure enough in him, for this purpose. And therefore that *such a degree of displeasure* could be made visible, neither in the atonement, nor in any other way. But, that such a degree of displeasure against sinners hath, in reality, no existence in the divine mind, at once destroys all notions of gospel grace, in their salvation; and *that*, whether they be saved through an atonement, or without it."⁵

¹ West's Essay, p. 28.

³ Ib. pp. 27, 29, 65, 103, 171.

⁵ Ib. pp. 118, 119.

² Ib. p. 28.

⁴ See the Discourse of Dr. Maxcy.

"Could it be, that by his arduous and glorious work, the Great God and Saviour brought himself into debt to his rebel subjects? On what possible grounds can we found any claims? Because Jesus has so loved us, as to wash away our sins in his own blood, shall we, therefore, claim pardon and salvation as our *due*? Instead of that, how manifest is it, that nothing could ever, so clearly and fully demonstrate, that the salvation of sinners must be only *by grace*, as the atonement made by Christ—or, manifest such unspeakable riches and glory in *that grace* by which sinners of mankind are saved!"¹

11. As Christ was not literally punished in enduring the exact penalty of the law, and as therefore our sins are not literally imputed to him, so his righteousness is not literally imputed to us. The nature of the atonement explains the nature of justification, and, in its turn, the nature of justification explains the nature of atonement. Christ endured evils as a consequence of God's anger against us, and we receive benefits as a consequence of Christ's obedient suffering for us. His obedience is honored in our salvation, as our disobedience is stigmatized in his sufferings.

"The happy and blessed fruits of *Christ's glorious righteousness*, are conferred upon sinners of mankind, and enjoyed by them." "This is the true and only proper import of the *imputation* of Christ's righteousness to believers. This is to have his righteousness *imputed* to them; for *them* to enjoy the benefits, the happy fruits of it."²

12. It is obvious, from the preceding extracts, that Dr. West caught the spirit, as well as the words of the Edwardean theory, as that theory is distinguished in ascribing not only the origin but also the *application* of the atonement, to mere Sovereignty. It is illogical, it is self-contradictory, to represent God as a Sovereign in doing that which he is obligated in distributive justice to do. He is compelled as a just God to inflict no punishment on men whose punishment has been fully endured once, and to require no duty of men whose whole duty has been performed once. Now partly in order to exalt the Sovereign government of God, Dr. West represents the Atonement, not as making it *necessary*

¹ West's Essay, p. 177. See likewise pp. 118-121.

² Ib. pp. 108, 109, 111, 163, &c. See Hopkins's Theory of Imputation in III. 9, pp. lvi-lix. of this Essay.

but as making it *consistent* for God to save men ; not compulsory on God as a *just judge*, but proper or desirable for him as a *free Sovereign* to save men ; not to save a *part* of the race, provided that they are elected, but to save *any* or *all* of the race, provided that his Sovereign benevolence can promote the welfare of the universe by their salvation. Dr. West says : —

“ But *merely* from the exhibition which was made of divine wrath in the sufferings of Christ, the pardon, even of one sinner could, with no certainty be inferred : — Unless it might be inferred from the highest evidences of the reality of God’s displeasure against us, that *therefore* he would, certainly *not punish*, but *pardon* us. Upon atonement being made, the situation and circumstances are such, that the great Governor of the world may consistently bestow, or withhold mercy, just as shall tend most effectually to answer the general purposes of divine goodness. Whereas, had there been no atonement, there would have been the highest inconsistency in the bestowment of pardon, even on one sinner. Now, the divine benevolence might express itself in having mercy on whom it would have mercy, and whom it would, hardening ; just as it would contribute to the greatest felicity of the created system ; while, without an atonement, benevolence itself could never have urged, or even admitted, the pardon of one sinner.

“ The *atonement*, therefore, expresseth a benevolence which has, for its object, the highest good of the creation : — that very character of God which is expressed in the free and general invitations of the Gospel. From *the atonement*, therefore, the universal salvation of sinners cannot, with the least appearance of reason, be inferred ; unless it be first made further evident, that the ends of the truest and most perfect benevolence cannot otherwise be completely answered ; which, it is presumed cannot be done.”¹

13. Dr. West illustrates the genius of the Edwardean theory, by ascribing the application of the atonement not only to the Sovereign *right*, but likewise to the Sovereign *grace* of God. A main design of his Essay is to show, that the sufferings and death of Christ give a *sensible, visible manifestation*, a *vivid picture* of God’s retributive sentiment against us, therefore of our demerit, of our *present* ill-desert, and thus give an eloquent testimony that we are saved *while* we deserved to be lost, are saved by grace which consists in favoring those who may still be *justly* punished. “ The clearer views we have of the displeasure of God on one hand, the more lively apprehension shall we have of divine grace on the other.” But the atonement of Christ is the vivid sign of God’s

¹ West’s Essay, pp. 140, 141. See also p. 136.

displeasure against us; it gives the most *sensible demonstration* of his anger against *our sinful character*, therefore it sets off and holds out in bold relief, the disposition of God to bestow "good upon those whose character he righteously abhors;" "yea, the atonement is the only glass in which the true beauty and glory of the free, sovereign grace of God can be seen."¹

We have now illustrated the Rise of the Edwardean theory of the Atonement, by citing certain passages directly or indirectly suggesting it, and written by the four men who exerted a more decided influence than others on the accredited advocates of that theory. The first of these four men was the father of Dr. Edwards, the second was his theological teacher, the third was his most valued counsellor and was intimately associated with him in the examination of his father's manuscripts, and the fourth was his constant friend. Through Dr. Edwards the hints and tendencies of these four divines were transferred in a modified and stimulating form to his pupils, Dwight and Griffin; to his friends Backus and Smalley. Through Dr. Smalley the formative influences of his instructor Bellamy were applied, in a modified and animating way, to Emmons, the pupil of Smalley, and the friend of Hopkins and West. Through Samuel Spring, a pupil of Bellamy, of Hopkins and of West, and, in a double sense, the brother of Emmons, the personal influence of these divines was transfused into the Constitution of Andover Theological Seminary. In similar methods have a multitude of theologians been interlocked more or less intimately with the four men whose express instructions or tacit intimations have either introduced, or paved the way for introducing, the Edwardean theory of the Atonement.

It is an instructive fact, that Drs. West, Edwards, and Smalley, published their views of the Atonement, within one and the same twelve-month, 1785-6. That was the period when the irruption of Universalism into New England, had assumed a peculiarly alarming aspect. The advocates of Universalism derived some of their most plausible arguments in favor of it, from the old Calvinistic theory of the Atonement,

¹ West's *Essay*, pp. 119-121, 165-179, &c. &c.

as a literal infliction of the legal penalty, and a literal satisfaction of vindictive justice. There was no way of refuting these arguments without resorting to the unamiable and unscriptural notion, that the atonement was designed for the elect only; or else resorting to a more Biblical theory than had prevailed respecting the very nature of the atonement itself. Thus it was the Edwardean theory, which prevented multitudes from regarding the fact of Christ's mediation, as the strong tower of Universalism. It has changed the entire current of speculation among Universalists. It has been fruitful of practical good. Its aim was practical, as well as scientific. To the earlier advocates of it, the churches owe a debt of lasting gratitude.

Ten years after the doctrine had been explained by West, Edwards, and Smalley, it was explained in substantially the same way, by the accomplished Maxcy, who had long been an admirer of West and Edwards, and who subsequently succeeded Edwards in the Presidency of Union College. He differed from those two divines in some particulars. His Discourse, printed in 1796, was favorably received by his denomination, and since the publication of it some able advocates of the Edwardean theory have appeared among the Baptists.

In the years 1800, 1812, 1813, 1823, 1825-6, Dr. Emmons made known his views of the Atonement. These views he presented in various discourses, only two of which are here reprinted. These two discourses do not, of course, exhibit their author's opinions in the fulness of outline and in the symmetry of form, which might be given to them by a collection of all his sermons relating to this theme. But they *suggest* the entire system, which his collected works more fully *reveal*.

In 1819, after Dr. Emmons had published some of his discourses, Dr. Griffin gave to the public his "Humble Attempt to reconcile the differences of Christians" on this theme. He designed partly to disprove certain principles advanced in a Lecture of an eminent theological Professor, who is understood to have re-written, or, at least, revised the Lecture for an extensive circulation among the churches; and partly to disprove certain principles which he regarded Dr. Emmons as maintaining; and partly to reconcile two opposing evangelical schools, by showing that their differences arose from their more general or more restricted, their more vague or more precise, terminology.

Rev. Caleb Burge published his Essay on the Atonement, three years after the Treatise of Griffin. It was introduced into the world under the auspices of Dr. Emmons, Dr. Samuel Worcester of Salem, Dr. Spring of Newburyport, and Dr. Burton of Thetford. Rev. Dr. Woods of Andover often expressed his high opinion of it. That eminently pious missionary, Rev. Daniel Temple, remarked once to the writer of this Introduction: "I have derived more instruction in regard to the Atonement, from the Treatise of Mr. Burge, than from any other uninspired volume."

The Dialogue of Dr. Weeks was published eleven years after Mr. Burge's Essay, and is now printed for the fourth time. It was written in opposition to the same unprinted but "*quasi* published" Lecture, which had aroused the opposition of Dr. Griffin, and which continued to be eagerly circulated under the supposed sanction, and in supposed conformity with both the wish and the design, of its able author. The discussion of Dr. Weeks was originally published as eleven distinct Dialogues in the Utica Christian Repository, for 1823. They received a lengthened reply in the fourth volume of the Christian Advocate, edited by Dr. Ashbel Green.

The above-named works written on the basis, or in defence of the Edwardean theory of the Atonement are now republished, not because they are more complete than other Treatises prepared with the same general aim, but because each of these works was designed to strike upon certain veins of thought which had not been generally opened, and each of them contributes a certain class of ideas which have been combined in the Edwardean system; a system extensively advocated by American and English divines, often practically believed where it is not theoretically acknowledged, and promising to become the prevailing faith of evangelical thinkers.

THE NECESSITY OF ATONEMENT AND THE CONSISTENCY
BETWEEN THAT AND FREE GRACE IN FORGIVENESS.

THREE SERMONS

DELIVERED AT NEW HAVEN, A.D. 1785.

I.

THE NECESSITY OF ATONEMENT.

II.

THE ATONEMENT CONSISTENT WITH FREE GRACE.

III.

INFERENCES AND REFLECTIONS.

BY

JONATHAN EDWARDS, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF UNION COLLEGE.

SERMON I.

THE NECESSITY OF ATONEMENT.

IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS,
ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE. — Ephesians 1: 11.

THE doctrine of the forgiveness of sins is a capital doctrine of the gospel, and is much insisted on by the writers of the New Testament; above all, by the author of this epistle. In our text he asserts that we are forgiven according to the riches of grace; not merely in the exercise of grace, as the very term forgiveness implies; but in the exercise of the riches of grace; importing that forgiveness is an act of the most free and abundant grace. Yet he also asserts that this gratuitous forgiveness is in consequence of a redemption by the blood of Christ. But how are these two parts of the proposition consistent? If we be, in the literal sense, forgiven in consequence of a redemption, we are forgiven on account of the price of redemption previously paid. How then can we be truly said to be forgiven; a word which implies the exercise of grace? and especially how can we be said to be forgiven according to the riches of grace? This is, at least, a seeming inconsistency. If our forgiveness be purchased, and the price of it be already paid, it seems to be a matter of debt, and not of grace. This difficulty hath occasioned some to reject the doctrine of Christ's redemption, satisfaction, or atonement. Others, who have not been driven to that extremity by this difficulty, yet have been exceedingly perplexed and embarrassed. Of these last, I freely confess myself to have been one. Having from my youth devoted myself to the study of theoretic and practical theology, this has to me been one of the *gordian knots* in that science. How far what shall now be offered towards a solution, ought to afford satisfaction, is submitted to the judgment of my candid auditors.

Our text naturally suggests these three inquiries:—

Are sinners forgiven through the redemption or atonement of Jesus Christ only? What is the reason or ground of this mode of forgiveness? Is this mode of forgiveness consistent with grace, or according to the riches of grace? Let us consider these in their order.

I. Are we forgiven through the redemption or atonement of Jesus Christ only? I say redemption or atonement, because, in my view, they mutually imply each other. That we are forgiven through the atonement of Christ, and can be forgiven in no other way, the Scriptures very clearly teach. For evidence as to the first of these particulars, I appeal to the following passages of Scripture, which are indeed but a few of the many which exhibit the same truth. First, our text itself: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Rom. 3: 24; "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Acts 20: 28; "To feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Heb. 9: 12; "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." 1 Pet. 1: 18; "Forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Ibid. chap. 2: 24; "Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." Isa. 53: 4, 5, 6; "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Ibid. 10, 11, 12; "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, — he shall bear their iniquities, — and he bare the sins of many."

The Scriptures also teach the absolute necessity of the atonement of Christ, and that we can obtain forgiveness and salvation through that only. The sacrifices appointed to be made by the ancient Israelites, seem evidently to point to Christ; and to show the necessity of the vicarious sacrifice of him, who is therefore said to be "our passover sacrificed for us;" and to have "given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor;" and "now once in the end of the world to have appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." 1 Cor. 5: 7. Eph. 5: 2. Heb. 9: 26. As the ancient Israelites could obtain pardon in no other way than by those sacrifices, this teaches us that we can obtain it only by the sacrifice of Christ.

The positive declarations of the New Testament teach the same truth still more directly, as Luke 24: 25, 26; "O fools, and slow of heart

to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" verse 46; "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Rom. 3: 25, 26; "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, — that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." It seems that God could not have been just in justifying the believer, had not Christ been made a propitiation. John 3: 14, 15; "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up." Heb. 9: 22; "Without shedding of blood is no remission." 1 Cor. 3: 11; "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Acts 4: 12; "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The necessity of the death and atonement of Christ sufficiently appears by the bare event of his death. If his death were not necessary, he died in vain. But we cannot suppose that either he or his Father would have consented to his death, had it not been absolutely necessary. Even a man of common wisdom and goodness, would not consent either to his own death or that of his son, but in a case of necessity, and in order to some important and valuable end. Much less can we suppose, that either Christ Jesus the Son would have consented to his own death, or that the infinitely wise and good Father would have consented to the death of his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, in whom his soul was well pleased, and who was full of grace and truth, the brightness of his own glory, and the express image of his person, the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely, if there had not been the most urgent necessity. Especially as this most excellent Son so earnestly prayed to the Father to except him from death, Matt. 20: 39; "O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." The Son himself hath told us, John 11: 42, "That the Father heareth him always:" and therefore we may be sure, that if the condition of his pathetic petition had taken place, if it had been possible that the designs of God in the salvation of sinners should be accomplished without the death of Christ, Christ's prayer, in this instance, would have been answered, and he would have been exempted from death. And since he was not exempted, we have clear evidence that his death was a matter of absolute necessity.

The necessity of the atonement of Christ is clearly taught also by the apostle, Gal. 2: 21; "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." It is to no purpose to pretend that the law, in this passage, means the ceremonial law, because he tells us, chap. 3, 21, "That if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily right-

eousness should have been by the law." But the moral law was a law which had been given; and since no law which had been given could give life, it follows, that forgiveness and life could not be by the moral law, any more than by the ceremonial, and that if they could, Christ is dead in vain.

II. Our next inquiry is, what is the reason or ground of this mode of forgiveness? or why is an atonement necessary in order to the pardon of the sinner? I answer, it is necessary on the same ground, and for the same reasons, as punishment would have been necessary, if there had been no atonement made. The ground of both is the same. The question then comes to this: Why would it have been necessary, if no atonement had been made, that punishment should be inflicted on the transgressors of the divine law? This, I suppose, would have been necessary, to maintain the authority of the divine law. If that be not maintained, but the law fall into contempt, the contempt will fall equally on the legislator himself; his authority will be despised and his government weakened.

And as the contempt shall increase, which may be expected to increase, in proportion to the neglect of executing the law, the divine government will approach nearer and nearer to a dissolution, till at length it will be totally annihilated.

But when moral creatures are brought into existence, there must be a moral government. It cannot be reconciled with the wisdom and goodness of God, to make intelligent creatures and leave them at random, without moral law and government. This is the dictate of reason from the nature of things. Besides the nature of things, we have in the present instance fact, to assist our reasoning. God hath in fact given a moral law and established a moral government over his intelligent creatures. So that we have clear proof, that infinite wisdom and goodness judged it to be necessary to put intelligent creatures under moral law and government. But in order to a moral law, there must be a penalty; otherwise it would be mere advice, but no law. In order to support the authority and vigor of this law, the penalty must be inflicted on transgressors. If a penalty be denounced, indeed, but never inflicted, the law becomes no law, as really as if no penalty had been annexed to it. As well might no law have been made or published, as that a law be published, with all the most awful penalties, and these never be inflicted. Nay, in some respects it would be much better and more reconcilable with the divine perfections. It would be more consistent, and show that the legislator was not ignorant, either of his own want of power to carry a law into effect, or of the rights of his subjects, or of the boundaries between right and wrong. But to enact a law and not execute it, implies a weakness of some kind or other; either an error of judgment, or a consciousness

of a depraved design in making the law, or a want of power to carry it into effect, or some other defect. Therefore such a proceeding as this is dishonorable and contemptible; and by it both the law and legislator not only appear in a contemptible light, but really are contemptible.

Hence, to execute the threatening of the divine law, is necessary to preserve the dignity and authority of the law, and of the author of it, and to the very existence of the divine moral government. It is no impeachment of the divine power and wisdom to say, that it is impossible for God himself to uphold his moral government over intelligent creatures, when once his law hath fallen into contempt. He may indeed govern them by irresistible force, as he governs the material world; but he cannot govern them by law, by rewards and punishments.

If God maintain the authority of his law, by the infliction of the penalty, it will appear that he acts consistently in the legislative and executive parts of his government. But if he were not to inflict the penalty, he would act, and appear to act, an inconsistent part; or to be inconsistent with himself. If the authority of the divine law be supported by the punishment of transgressors, it will most powerfully tend to restrain all intelligent creatures from sin. But if the authority of the law be not supported, it will rather encourage and invite to sin, than restrain from it.

For these reasons, which are indeed all implied in supporting the dignity and authority of the divine law, it would have been necessary, had no atonement for sin been made, that the penalty of the law be inflicted on transgressors.

If in this view of the matter it should be said, though for the reasons before mentioned it is necessary that the penalty of the law, in many instances, or in most instances, be inflicted, yet why is it necessary that it should be inflicted in every instance? Why could not the Deity, in a sovereign way, without any atonement, have forgiven at least some sinners? Why could not the authority of the law have been sufficiently supported, without the punishment of every individual transgressor? We find that such strictness is not necessary or even subservient to the public good, in human governments; and why is it necessary in the divine? To these inquiries I answer by other inquiries. Why, on the supposition of no atonement, would it have been necessary that the penalty of the law should be inflicted in any instance? Why could not the Deity, in a sovereign way, without any atonement, have pardoned all mankind? I presume it will be granted, for the reasons before assigned, that such a proceeding as this would be inconsistent with the dignity and authority of the divine law and government. And the same consequence, in a degree, follows from every instance of pardon in this mode. It is

true the ends of human governments are tolerably answered, though in some instances the guilty are suffered to pass with impunity. But as imperfection attends all human affairs, so it attends human governments in this very particular, that there are reasons of state which require, or the public good requires, that gross criminals, in some instances, be dismissed with impunity, and without atonement. Thus, because the government of David was weak, and the sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him, Joab, a most atrocious murderer, could not, during the life of David, be brought to justice. In other instances, atrocious criminals are pardoned, in order to obtain information against others still more atrocious and dangerous to the community. In many instances the principals only, in certain high crimes, are punished; the rest being led away by artifice and misrepresentation, are not supposed to deserve punishment. And it is presumed that, in every instance wherein it is really for the good of the community to pardon a criminal, without proper satisfaction for his crime, it is because of either some weakness in the particular state of the government, under which the pardon is granted; or some imperfection in the laws of that state, not being adapted to the particular case; or some imperfection attending all human affairs. But as not any one of these is supposable in the divine government, there is no arguing conclusively, from pardons in human governments, to pardons in the divine.

It may be added, that in every instance in human governments in which just laws are not strictly executed, the government is so far weakened, and the character of the rulers, either legislative or executive, suffers, either in point of ability or in point of integrity. If it be granted that the law is just, and condemns sin to no greater punishment than it deserves, and if God were to pardon it without atonement, it would seem, that he did not hate sin in every instance, nor treat it as being what it really is, infinitely vile.

For these reasons, it appears that it would have been necessary, provided no atonement had been made, that the penalty of the law should have been inflicted, even in every instance of disobedience: and for the same reasons doubtless was it necessary, that if any sinners were to be pardoned, they should be pardoned only in consequence of an adequate atonement. The atonement is the substitute for the punishment threatened in the law; and was designed to answer the same ends of supporting the authority of the law, the dignity of the divine moral government, and the consistency of the divine conduct in legislation and execution. By the atonement it appears that God is determined that his law shall be supported; that it shall not be despised or transgressed with impunity; and that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God.

The very idea of an atonement or satisfaction for sin, is something

which, to the purposes of supporting the authority of the divine law, and the dignity and consistency of the divine government, is equivalent to the punishment of the sinner, according to the literal threatening of the law. That which answers these purposes being done, whatever it be, atonement is made, and the way is prepared for the dispensation of pardon. In any such case, God can be just and yet the justifier of the sinner. And that that which is sufficient to answer these purposes has been done for us, according to the gospel plan, I presume none can deny, who believe that the eternal word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and that he, the only begotten and well beloved Son of God, John 1 : 14, bare our sins in his own body on the tree, 1 Peter 2 : 24, and gave himself a sacrifice to God for us, Eph. 5 : 2.

But perhaps some who may readily grant that what Christ hath done and suffered is undoubtedly sufficient to atone for the sins of his people, may also suppose, that if God had seen fit so to order it, we might have made a sufficient atonement for our own sins. Or whether they believe in the reality and sufficiency of the atonement of Christ or not, they may suppose that we might have atoned, or even now may atone, for our own sins. This hypothesis therefore demands our attention.

If we could have atoned, by any means, for our own sins, it must have been either by our repentance and reformation, or by enduring a punishment, less in degree or duration, than that which is threatened in the law as the wages of sin. No other way for us to atone for our own sins appears to be conceivable. But if we attend to the subject, we shall find that we can make no proper atonement in either of these ways.

1. We could not make atonement for our sins by repentance and reformation. Repentance and reformation are a mere return to our duty, which we ought never to have forsaken or intermitted. Suppose a soldier deserts the service into which he is enlisted, and at the most critical period not only forsakes his general and the cause of his country, but joins the enemy and exerts himself to his utmost in his cause, and in direct opposition to that of his country ; yet, after twelve months spent in this manner, he repents and returns to his duty and his former service : will this repentance and reformation atone for his desertion and rebellion ? will his repentance and return, without punishment, support the authority of the law against desertion and rebellion, and deter others from the like conduct equally as the punishment of the delinquent according to law ? It cannot be pretended. Such a treatment of the soldier would express no indignation or displeasure of the general at the conduct of the soldier ; it would by no means convince the army or the world, that it was a most heinous crime to desert and join the standard of the enemy. Just so in the case under consideration. The language of forgiving sinners

barely on their repentance is, that he who sins shall repent; that the curse of the law is repentance; that he who repents shall suffer, and that he deserves, no further punishment. But this would be so far from an effectual tendency to discourage and restrain from sin, that it would greatly encourage to the commission and indulgence of it; as all that sinners would have to fear, on this supposition, would be not the wrath of God, nor any thing terrible, but the greatest blessing to which any man in this life can attain,—repentance. If this were the condition of forgiving sinners, not only no measures would be taken to support the divine law, but none to vindicate the character of God himself, or to show that he acts a consistent part, and agreeably to his own law; or that he is a friend to virtue and an enemy to vice. On the other hand, he would rather appear as a friend to sin and vice, or indifferent concerning them. What would you think of a prince who should make a law against murder, and should threaten it with a punishment properly severe, yet should declare that none who should be guilty of that crime and should repent, should be punished? or if he did not positively declare this, yet should in fact suffer all murderers, who repented of their murders, to pass with impunity? Undoubtedly you would conclude that he was either a very weak or a very wicked prince; either that he was unable to protect his subjects, or that he had no real regard to their lives or safety, whether in their individual or collective capacity.

2. Neither could we make atonement by any sufferings short of the full punishment of sin. Because the very idea of atonement is something done, which, to the purpose of supporting the authority of the law, the dignity and consistency of divine government and conduct, is fully equivalent to the curse of the law, and on the ground of which, the sinner may be saved from that curse. But no sufferings endured by the sinner himself, short of the curse of the law, can be to these purposes equivalent to that curse; any more than a less number or quantity can be equal to a greater. Indeed a less degree or duration of suffering endured by Christ the Son of God, may, on account of the infinite dignity and glory of his person, be an equivalent to the curse of the law endured by the sinner: as it would be a far more striking demonstration of a king's displeasure, to inflict, in an ignominious manner, on the body of his own son, forty stripes save one, than to punish some obscure subject with death. But when the person is the same, it is absurd to suppose that a less degree or duration of pain can be equal to a greater, or can equally strike terror into the minds of spectators, and make them fear and no more do any such wickedness. Deut. 13: 11.

Besides; if a less degree or duration of punishment, inflicted on the sinner, would answer all the purposes of supporting the authority of the

divine law, &c., equally as that punishment which is threatened in the law ; it follows that the punishment which is threatened in the law is too great, is unjust, is cruel and oppressive ; which cannot be as long as God is a just being.

Thus it clearly appears, that we could never have atoned for our own sins. If therefore atonement be made at all, it must be made by some other person : and since, as we before argued, Christ the Son of God hath been appointed to this work, we may be sure that it could be done by no other person of inferior dignity.

It may be inquired of those who deny the necessity of the atonement of Christ, whether the mission, work, and death of Christ were at all necessary in order to the salvation of sinners. If they grant that they were necessary, as they exhibit the strongest motives to repentance, I ask further, could not God by any revelation or motives otherwise, whether externally or internally exhibited, lead sinners to repentance ? We find he did in fact, without the mission, work, and death of Christ, lead the saints of the Old Testament to repentance. And doubtless in the same way, he might have produced the same effect, on men of modern times. Why then doth the Scripture say, "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ:" and, "neither is there salvation in any other?" If it be said that these texts are true, as God hath seen fit to adopt and establish this mode of salvation, it occurs at once, that then it may with equal truth be said, concerning those who were converted by the preaching of Paul, other foundation could no man lay, for their salvation, than the apostle Paul. In this sense, too, every event which ever takes place, is equally necessary as the mission and death of Christ : and it was in no other sense necessary, that Christ should be sent and die, than that a sparrow should fall, or not fall, to the ground. In short, to say that the mission and death of Christ were necessary, because God had made this constitution, is to resolve all into the sovereignty of God, and to confess that no reason of Christ's mission and death is assignable.

Besides, if the mission, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the knowledge of them, be, by divine constitution, made necessary to the salvation of sinners, this will seem to be wholly inconsistent with the fundamental principle of the system of those who deny the atonement of Christ ; I mean the principle, that it is not reconcilable with the perfections of God to refuse a pardon to any who repent. If bare repentance and reformation be the ground of pardon, doubtless all who repent, though ever so ignorant of Christ, his death and resurrection, and of the motives to repentance therein exhibited, are entitled to pardon ; and if so, in what sense will the Socinians say, the mission and death of Christ are necessary to pardon ? Not, surely, as purchasing salvation, for even those

who are ignorant of them ; this is abhorrent to their whole system. Not as exhibiting the strongest motives to repentance ; because, in the case now supposed, these motives are perfectly unknown. And they will not say, it is impossible for any to repent who are ignorant of Christ.*

Again, how is it more consistent with the divine perfections to confine pardon and salvation to the narrow limits of those who know and are influenced by the motives to repentance, implied in the death and resurrection of Christ, than to the limits of those who repent and depend on the atonement of Christ?

It may be further inquired of those gentlemen mentioned above, whether the pardon of the penitent be according to the divine law, or according to the gospel. If it be a constitution of the law, that every penitent be pardoned, what then is the gospel? And wherein does the grace of the latter, exceed that of the former? Besides, is it not strange to suppose that bare law knows any thing of repentance and of the promise of pardon on repentance? Surely such a law must be a very gracious law ; and a very gracious law, and a very gracious gospel, seem to be very nearly one and the same thing. It has been commonly understood that the divine law is the rule of justice. If so, and it be a provision of the law that every penitent be acquitted from punishment ; then surely there is no grace at all in the acquittal of the penitent, as the gentlemen, to whom I now refer, pretend there is none on the supposition of the satisfaction of Christ. Again, if the law secure impunity to all penitents, then all the terror or punishment which the law threatens, is either repentance itself, or that wise and wholesome discipline which is necessary to lead to repentance ; these are the true and utmost curse of the law. But neither of these is any curse at all ; they are at least among the greatest blessings which can be bestowed on those who need them. But if it be granted that the bare law of God does not secure pardon to the penitent, but admits of his punishment, it will follow that the punishment of the penitent would be nothing opposed to justice. Surely God hath not made an unjust law. It also follows, that to punish the penitent would be not at all inconsistent with the divine perfections ; unless God hath made a law which cannot, in any instance, be executed consistently with his own perfections. And if the punishment of the penitent, provided no atonement had been made, would not be inconsistent with justice, or with the perfections of God, who will say, that the pardon of the penitent, on the sole footing of an atonement, is inconsistent with either?

* "It is certainly the doctrine of reason, as well as of the Old Testament, that God is merciful to the penitent, and nothing is requisite to make men, in all situations, the objects of his favor, but such moral conduct as he has made them capable of. — *Priestly's Corruptions of Christianity*, p. 279.

If neither strict justice, nor the divine law founded on justice, nor the divine perfections, without an atonement, secure pardon to all who repent, what will become of the boasted argument of the Socinians, against the atonement, that God will certainly pardon and save, and that it is absurd and impious to suppose, that he will not pardon and save all who repent? Are the Socinians themselves certain, that God will not do that which eternal justice, his own law, and his own perfections, allow him to do? The dilemma is this:—eternal justice either requires that every penitent be pardoned in consequence of his repentance merely, or it does not. If it do require this, it follows, that pardon is an act of justice and not of grace; therefore let the Socinians be forever silent on this head. It also follows, that repentance answers, satisfies, fulfils, the divine law, so that, in consequence of it, the law has no further demand on the sinner. It is therefore either the complete righteousness of the law, or the complete curse of the law; for cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. It also follows, that sin is no moral evil. Doubtless that which deserves no punishment, or token of the divine displeasure, is no moral evil. But the utmost that justice, on this hypothesis, requires of the sinner, is repentance, which is no token of the divine displeasure, but an inestimable blessing. It also follows, that as eternal justice is no other than the eternal law of God, grace and truth, life and immortality came and were brought to light by Moses, since the law came by him; that the law contains exceeding great and precious promises, which promises however, exceeding great and precious as they are, are no more than assurances, that we shall not be injured. It follows, in the last place, that justice and grace, law and gospel, are perfectly synonymous terms.

Or if the other part of the dilemma be taken, that eternal justice does not require that every penitent be pardoned; who knows but that God may see fit to suffer justice, in some instances, to take place? who will say that the other divine perfections are utterly inconsistent with justice? or that wisdom, goodness, and justice cannot co-exist in the same character? or that the law of God is such that it cannot be executed in any instance, consistently with the divine character? * These would be bold assertions indeed; let him who avows them, at the same time prove them. Indeed he must either prove these assertions, or own that justice requires the pardon of every penitent, and abide the consequences; or renounce

* That law in which Paul delighted after the inward man; which he declares to be holy, and just, and good; to be glorious too, nay, in the abstract, glory (Rom. vii. and 2 Cor. iii.), and which David pronounces to be perfect, and more desirable than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Psalm xix.

the doctrine, that the divine perfections require that every penitent be pardoned, without an atonement.*

* "Arguments drawn from such considerations as those of the moral government of God, the nature of things, and the general plan of revelation, will not be put off to a future time. The whole compass and force of them is within our reach, and if the mind be unbiassed, they must, I think, determine our assent."—*Corruptions of Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 278.

SERMON II.

GRACE CONSISTENT WITH ATONEMENT.

IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS,
ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE. — Ephesians 1: 7.

HAVING, in the preceding discourse, given an answer to the two inquiries proposed concerning the necessity, and the ground of the necessity of the atonement of Christ, I proceed to the third, which is,

III. Are we, notwithstanding the redemption of Christ, forgiven freely by grace? That we should be forgiven wholly through the redemption of Christ, and yet by free grace, hath, as I observed, appeared to many a grand inconsistency, or a perplexing difficulty. In discoursing on this question, I shall,

1. Mention several modes in which attempts have been made to solve this difficulty. 2. I shall suggest some considerations which may possibly lead to the true solution.

First. I am to mention several modes, in which attempts have been made to solve this difficulty.

1. Some allow that there is no exercise of grace in the bare pardon* or justification of the sinner: that all the grace of the gospel consists in the gift of Christ; in providing an atonement; in the undertaking of Christ to make atonement, and in the actual making it. And as the pardon of the sinner is founded on those gracious actions; so that in a more lax sense is also said to be an act of grace. As to this account of the matter, I have to observe, that it is rather yielding to the objection, than answering it. It is allowed, in this state of the matter, that the pardon of the sinner is properly no act of grace. But this seems not

* The impropriety of expression, in speaking of pardon without grace, would need an apology, were it not common in treatises on this subject. No more is intended, than that the sinner is acquitted or released without grace.

to be reconcilable with the plain declarations of Scripture ; as in our text : "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." Rom. 3 : 24. These and such like passages seem plainly to import, that pardon itself is an act of grace, and not merely that it is founded on other acts, which are acts of grace. Besides the very idea of pardon or forgiveness implies grace. So far only is any crime pardoned, as it is pardoned graciously. To pardon a crime on the footing of justice, in the proper sense of the word justice, is a direct contradiction.

Again ; it is not proper to say, that the pardon of the sinner is an act of grace, merely because it is founded on the gracious gift of Christ, and his gracious act in making atonement. It is not proper to say, that any act is an act of grace, merely because it is founded on another act, which is really an act of grace. As well we may say, that if a creditor, by a third person, furnish his debtor with money sufficient to discharge his debt, when the debtor has paid, in this way, the full debt, it is an act of grace in the creditor to give up the obligation. Whereas, who does not see that the furnishing of the money, and the giving up of the obligation, are two distinct acts ; and however the former is indeed an act of grace, yet the latter is no more an act of grace, than if the money had been paid to some other creditor, and he had given up an obligation for the same sum. If it be an act of grace in the creditor to deliver up an obligation, for which he hath received the full sum, because the money paid was originally furnished by himself, then it would be consistent with justice in the creditor to retain the obligation, after he has received the full sum for which it was given ; or to reject the money, and cast the debtor into prison, though he tenders payment. But neither of these, I presume, will be pretended to be just.

2. Some have attempted to relieve the difficulty now under consideration in this manner : they say, the pardon of the sinner is no act of grace to Christ, because he has paid the debt for the sinner ; but that it is an act of grace to the sinner, because the debt was paid, not by the sinner himself, but by Christ. Nor was Christ so much as delegated by the sinner to pay his debt. Concerning this I observe, in the first place, that if the atonement of Christ be considered as the payment of a debt, the release of the sinner seems not to be an act of grace, although the payment be made by Christ, and not by the sinner personally. Suppose any one of you, my auditors, owes a certain sum ; he goes and pays the full sum himself personally. Doubtless all will agree, that the creditor, in this case, when he gives up the obligation, performs a mere act of justice, in which there is no grace at all. But in what respect

would there have been more grace in giving up the obligation, if the money had been sent by a servant, by a friend, or by a third person? Here I am sensible an objection will arise to this effect: but we did not send the payment of our debt to God, by the hand of Christ as our friend; we did not delegate him to make atonement for us; he was graciously appointed and given by God. To this I answer, that this objection places the whole grace of the gospel in providing the Saviour, not in the pardon of sin. Besides, if by delegating Christ, he meant such a sincere consent and earnest desire, that Christ should make atonement for us, as a man may have that his friend should discharge a debt in his behalf; without doubt every true Christian, in this sense, delegates Christ to make atonement for his sins. Did not Abraham and all the saints who lived before the incarnation of Christ, and who were informed that atonement was to be made for them by Christ, sincerely consent to it, and earnestly desire it? and though now Christ has actually made atonement, yet every one who walks in the steps of the faith of Abraham, is the subject of the like sincere consent to the office and work of Christ, and the like earnest desire, that by his atonement, a reconciliation may be effected between God and himself. So that if Christ have, in the proper sense of the words, paid the debt for his people, his people do as truly send him to make this payment, as a man ever sends his friend to make payment to his creditor.

Nor is any thing wanting to make any man, or all men, in this sense delegate Christ to make atonement for them, but the gift of repentance or a new heart. And if God had not prevented them by previously appointing Christ to the work of redemption, all mankind being brought to repentance, and being informed that Christ, on their consent and delegation, would make atonement for their sins, would freely have given their consent, and delegated him to the work.

But what if the people of Christ did not, in any sense, delegate him to this work? would this cause the payment of their debt by Christ, to be at all more consistent with free grace in their discharge? Suppose a man without any delegation, consent, or knowledge of his friend, pays the full demand of his creditor, it is manifest, that the creditor is obliged in justice to discharge the debtor, equally as if the agent had acted by delegation from the debtor. Or if we had in every sense delegated and commissioned Christ, still our pardon would be an act of grace, as still we should be treated more favorably than our personal characters deserve.

Now to apply the whole of this to the subject before us. If Christ have, in the proper sense of the words, paid the debt which we owed to God,

whether by a delegation from us or not; there can be no more grace in our discharge, than if we had paid it ourselves.

But the fact is, that Christ has not, in the literal and proper sense, paid the debt for us. It is indeed true, that our deliverance is called a redemption, which refers to the deliverance of a prisoner out of captivity, commonly effected by paying a certain sum as the price of his liberty. In the same strain, Christ is said to give himself a ransom for many, and Christians are said to be bought with a price, &c. All which Scripture expressions bring into view the payment of money, or the discharge of a debt. But it is to be remembered, that these are metaphorical expressions, therefore not literally and exactly true. We had not deprived God of his property; we had not robbed the treasury of heaven. God was possessed of as much property after the fall as before; the universe and the fulness thereof still remained to be his. Therefore when Christ made satisfaction for us, he refunded no property. As none had been taken away, none needed to be refunded. But we had rebelled against God, we had practically despised his law and authority, and it was necessary, that his authority should be supported, and that it should be made to appear, that sin shall not go without proper tokens of divine displeasure and abhorrence; that God will maintain his law; that his authority and government shall not be suffered to fall into contempt; and that God is a friend to virtue and holiness, and an irreconcilable enemy to transgression, sin, and vice. These things were necessary to be made manifest, and the clear manifestation of these things, if we will use the term, was the debt which was due to God. This manifestation was made in the sufferings and death of Christ. But Christ did not, in the literal sense, pay the debt we owed to God; if he had paid it, all grace would have been excluded from the pardon of the sinner. Therefore,

3. Others seeing clearly that these solutions of the difficulty are not satisfactory, have said, that the atonement of Christ consisted, not in the payment of a debt, but in the vindication of the divine law and character; that Christ made this vindication, by practically declaring the justice of the law, in his active obedience, and by submitting to the penalty of it, in his death; that as what Christ did and suffered in the flesh, was a declaration of the rectitude of the divine law and character, so it was a declaration of the evil of sin; and the greater the evil of sin appears to be, the greater the grace of pardon appears to be. Therefore the atonement of Christ is so far from diminishing the grace of pardon, that it magnifies it. The sum of this is, that since the atonement consists not in the payment of a debt, but in the vindication of the divine law and character; therefore it is not at all opposed to free grace in pardon.

Concerning this stating of the matter, I beg leave to observe ; that if by a vindication of the divine law and character be meant, proof given that the law of God is just, and that the divine character is good and irreproachable; I can by no means suppose, that the atonement consisted in a vindication of the law and character of God. The law is no more proved to be just, and the character of God is no more proved to be good, by the perfect obedience and death of Christ, than the same things are proved by the perfect obedience of the angels, and by the torments of the damned. But I shall have occasion to enlarge on this point by and by.

Again ; if by vindication of the divine law and character be meant, proof given that God is determined to support the authority of his law, and that he will not suffer it to fall into contempt ; that he will also support his own dignity, will act a consistent part in legislation and in the execution of his law, and will not be disobeyed with impunity, or without proper satisfaction ; I grant, that, by Christ the divine law and character are vindicated, so that God can now consistently with his own honor and the authority of his law forgive the sinner. But how does this make it appear that there is any grace in the pardon of the sinner, when Christ, as his substitute, hath made full atonement for him, by vindicating the law and character of God? what if the sinner himself, instead of Christ, had, by obedience and suffering, vindicated the law and character of God, and in consequence had been released from further punishment? Would his release, in this case, have been by grace, or by justice? Doubtless by the latter and not by the former ; for “to him that worketh, is the reward reckoned, not of grace, but of debt.” Rom. 4: 4. Therefore, why is it not equally an act of justice to release the sinner, in consequence of the same vindication made by Christ? Payment of debt equally precludes grace, when made by a third person, as when made by the debtor himself. And since the vindication of the divine law and character, made by the sinner himself, precludes grace from the release of the sinner ; why does not the same vindication as effectually preclude it, when made by a third person?

Those authors who give us this solution of the difficulty under consideration, seem to suppose that it is a sufficient solution to say that the atonement consists, not in the payment of debt, but in the vindication of the divine law and character ; and what they say, seems to imply, that however or by whomsoever that vindication be made, whether by the sinner himself, or any other person, it is not at all opposed to the exercise of grace in the release of the sinner. Whereas it appears by the text just now quoted, and by many others, that if that vindication were made by the sinner himself, it would shut out all grace from his release. And

I presume this will be granted by those authors themselves, on a little reflection. To say otherwise, is to say, that though a sinner should endure the curse of the law, yet there would be grace in his subsequent release. It seems, then, that the grace of pardon depends, not barely on this, that the atonement consists in a vindication of the law and character of God; but upon this particular circumstance attending the vindication, that it be made by a third person. And if this circumstance will leave room for grace in the release of the sinner, why is there not as much grace in the release of the sinner, though the atonement of Christ be a payment of the sinner's debt; since the payment is attended with the same important and decisive circumstance, that it is made by a third person?

Objection. But we could not vindicate the law and character of God; therefore it is absurd to make the supposition, and to draw consequences from the supposition, that we had made such a vindication. *Answer.* It is no more absurd to make this supposition, than it is to make the supposition, that we had paid the debt to divine justice; for we could no more do this than we could make the vindication in question. And if it follows, from this circumstance, that we neither have vindicated nor could vindicate the divine character, that our release from condemnation is an act of grace; why does it not also follow from the circumstance, that we neither have paid nor could pay the debt to divine justice, that our release is an act of grace, even on the supposition that Christ has, in the literal sense, paid the debt for us?

Thus, not any of these modes of solving this grand difficulty appears to be satisfactory. Even this last, which seemed to bid the fairest to afford satisfaction, fails. Therefore,

Secondly. I shall suggest some considerations which may possibly lead to the true solution. The question before us is, whether pardon through the atonement of Christ be an act of justice or of grace. In order to a proper answer to this question, it is of primary importance that we have clear and determinate ideas affixed to the words justice and grace.

I find the word justice to be used in three distinct senses; sometimes it means *commutative* justice, sometimes *distributive* justice, and sometimes what may be called general or *public* justice.

Commutative justice respects property and matters of commerce solely, and secures to every man his own property. To treat a man justly in this sense, is not to deprive him of his property, and whenever it falls into our hands, to restore it duly, or to make due payment of debts. In one word, commutative justice is to violate no man's property.

Distributive justice consists in properly rewarding virtue or good con-

duct, and punishing crimes or vicious conduct; and it has respect to a man's personal moral character or conduct. To treat a man justly in this sense, is to treat him according to his personal character or conduct. *Commutative* justice, in the recovering of debts, has no respect at all to the character or conduct of the debtor, but merely to the property of the creditor. *Distributive* justice, in the punishment of crimes, has no respect at all to the property of the criminal, but merely to his personal conduct; unless his property may, in some instances, enhance his crimes.

General or *public* justice comprehends all moral goodness; and though the word is often used in this sense, it is really an improper use of it. In this sense, whatever is right, is said to be just, or an act of justice; and whatever is wrong or improper to be done, is said to be unjust, or an act of injustice. To practise justice in this sense, is to practise agreeably to the dictates of general benevolence, or to seek the glory of God and the good of the universe. And whenever the glory of God is neglected, it may be said that God is injured or deprived of his right. Whenever the general good is neglected or impeded, the universe may be said to suffer an injury. For instance; if Paul were now to be cast down from heaven, to suffer the pains of hell, it would be wrong, as it would be inconsistent with God's covenant faithfulness, with the designed exhibition of his glorious grace, and with the good of the universe. In this sense, it would not be just. Yet in the sense of distributive justice, such a treatment of Paul would be perfectly just, as it would be no more than correspondent to his personal demerits.

The term grace, comes now to be explained. Grace is ever so opposed to justice, that they mutually limit each other. Wherever grace begins, justice ends; and wherever justice begins, grace ends. Grace, as opposed to commutative justice, is gratuitously to relinquish your property, or to forgive a man his debt. And commutative injustice is to demand more of a man than your own property. Grace, as opposed to justice in the distributive sense, is to treat a man more favorably or mildly than is correspondent to his personal character or conduct. To treat him unjustly is to use him with greater severity than is correspondent to his personal character. It is to be remembered, that, in personal character, I include punishment endured, as well as actions performed. When a man has broken any law, and has afterwards suffered the penalty of that law; as he has, by the transgression, treated the law with contempt, so by suffering the penalty, he has supported the authority of it; and the latter makes a part of his personal character, as he stands related to that law, as really as the former.

With regard to the third kind of justice, as this is improperly called justice, and as it comprehends all moral goodness, it is not at all opposed

to grace ; but comprehends that, as well as every other virtue, as truth, faithfulness, meekness, forgiveness, patience, prudence, temperance, fortitude, &c. All these are right and fit, and the contrary tempers or practices are wrong, and injurious to God and the system ; and therefore, in this sense of justice, are unjust. And even grace itself, which is favor to the ill-deserving, so far as it is wise and proper to be exercised, makes but a part of this kind of justice.

We proceed now to apply these explanations to the solution of the difficulty under consideration. The question is this, Is the pardon of the sinner, through the atonement of Christ, an act of justice or of grace ? To which I answer, That with respect to *commutative* justice, it is neither an act of justice nor of grace. Because commutative justice is not concerned in the affair. We neither owed money to the Deity, nor did Christ pay any on our behalf. His atonement is not a payment of our debt. If it had been, our discharge would have been an act of mere justice, and not of grace. To make the sinner also pay the debt, which had been already paid by Christ, would be manifestly injurious, oppressive, and beyond the bounds of commutative justice, the rule of which is, that every man retain and recover his own property, and that only. But a debt being paid, by whomsoever it be paid, the creditor has recovered his property, and therefore has a right to nothing further. If he extort, or attempt to extort, any thing further, he proceeds beyond his right and is guilty of injustice. So that if Christ had paid the debt for the believer, he would be discharged, not on the footing of grace, but of strict justice.

With respect to *distributive* justice, the discharge of the sinner is wholly an act of grace. This kind of justice has respect solely to the personal character and conduct of its object. And then is a man treated justly, when he is treated according to his *personal* moral character. If he be treated more favorably than is correspondent to his personal character, he is the object of grace. I say *personal* character ; for distributive justice has no respect to the character of a *third* person, or to any thing which may be done or suffered by another person, than by him, who is the object of this justice, or who is on trial, to be rewarded or punished. And with regard to the case now before us, what if Christ has made an atonement for sin ? This atonement constitutes no part of the personal character of the sinner ; but his personal character is essentially the same, as it would have been, if Christ had made no atonement. And as the sinner, in pardon, is treated not only more favorably, but infinitely more favorably, than is correspondent to his personal character, his pardon is wholly an act of infinite grace. If it were, in the sense of *distributive* justice, an act of justice ; he would be injured, if a pardon were refused him. But as the case is, he would not be injured, though a pardon were

refused him ; because he would not be treated more unfavorably than is correspondent to his personal character.

Therefore though it be true, that if a third person pay a debt, there would be no grace exercised by the creditor in discharging the debtor ; yet when a third person atones for a crime, by suffering in the stead of a criminal, there is entire grace in the discharge of the criminal, and *distributive justice* still allows him to be punished in his own person. The reason is, what I have mentioned already, that justice in punishing crimes, respects the personal character only of the criminal ; but in the payment of debts, it respects the recovery of property only. In the former case, it admits of any treatment which is according to his personal character ; in the latter, it admits of nothing beyond the recovery of property.

So that though Christ has made complete atonement for the sins of all his disciples, and they are justified wholly through his redemption ; yet they are justified wholly by grace. Because they *personally* have not made atonement for their sins, or suffered the curse of the law. Therefore they have no claim to a discharge on account of their own personal conduct and suffering. And if it is objected, that neither is a debtor discharged on account of any thing which he hath done personally, when he is discharged on the payment of his debt by a third person ; yet justice does not admit, that the creditor recover the debt again from the debtor himself : why then does it admit that a magistrate inflict the punishment of a crime on the criminal himself, when atonement has been made by a substitute ? The answer is, that justice in these two cases is very different, and respects very different objects. In criminal causes, it respects the personal conduct or character of the criminal, and admits of any treatment which is correspondent to that conduct. In civil causes, or matters of debt, it respects the restitution of property only, and this being made, it admits of no further demand.

In the third sense of justice before explained, according to which any thing is just, which is right and best to be done ; the pardon of the sinner is entirely an act of justice. It is undoubtedly most conducive to the divine glory, and general good of the created system, that every believer should be pardoned ; and therefore, in the present sense of the word, it is an act of justice. The pardon of the sinner is equally an act of justice, if, as some suppose, he be pardoned not on account of the death of Christ, considered as an equivalent to the curse of the law denounced against the sinner ; but merely on account of the positive obedience of Christ. If this be the mode and the condition of pardon established by God, doubtless pardon granted in this mode and on this condition, is most conducive to the divine glory and the general good.

Therefore it is, in the sense of justice now under consideration, an act of justice; insomuch that if pardon were not granted in this mode, the divine glory would be tarnished, and the general good diminished, or the universe would suffer an injury. The same would be true, if God had in fact granted pardon, without any atonement, whether by suffering or obedience. We might have argued from that fact, that infinite wisdom saw it to be most conducive to the divine glory and the general good, to pardon without an atonement; and of course that if pardon had not been granted in this way, both the divine glory and general good would have been diminished, and injustice would have been done to the universe. In the same sense the gift of Christ to be our Saviour, his undertaking to save us, and every other gift of God to his creatures, are acts of justice. But it must be remembered, that this is an improper sense of the word justice, and is not at all opposed to grace, but implies it. For all those divine acts and gifts just mentioned, though in this sense they are acts of justice, yet are, at the same time, acts of pure grace.

In this sense of justice the word seems to be used by the apostle Paul, Rom. 3: 26; "To declare his righteousness (or justice) that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." That God might be just to himself and to the universe. Again, in Psalm 85: 10; "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Righteousness, in the *distributive* sense, hath not kissed peace with respect to the sinner; but so far as it speaks any thing, calls for his punishment. But the public good, and the divine glory admit of peace with the sinner. In the same sense the word occurs in the version of the Psalms in common use among us, where it is said, "justice is pleased, and peace is given." Again, in the catechism of the assembly of divines, where they say, "Christ offered up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice."

Thus it appears that the pardon of the sinner, in reference to *distributive* justice, which is the only proper sense of the word, with respect to this matter, is entirely an act of grace, and that although he is pardoned wholly through the redemption of Jesus Christ.

It is in the same sense an act of grace, as the gift of Christ, or any other most gracious act of God. Though the sinner is pardoned wholly through the redemption of Christ, yet his pardon is an act of pure grace, because in it he is treated inconceivably more favorably than is correspondent to his personal character.

The pardon of the sinner, on this plan of the redemption or the atonement of Christ, is as entirely an act of grace, as if it had been granted on an atonement made, not by the sufferings of Christ, but merely by

his active obedience. For if we suppose, that the atonement of Christ consists wholly in the obedience of Christ, not in his sufferings, in what sense would the pardon of the sinner be an act of grace, in which it is not an act of grace, on the hypothesis concerning the atonement which hath been now stated? Pardon is no more procured by the payment of the sinner's debt, in the one case, than in the other. If it be said that Christ's suffering the curse of the law is the payment of the debt; I answer, this is no more a payment of the debt, than the obedience of Christ. If it be said that Christ's obedience only honors and magnifies the law, I answer, no more is done by the sufferings of Christ. It is true, that if the sinner be pardoned on account of Christ's obedience, he is treated more favorably than is correspondent to his personal character. The same is true, if he be pardoned on account of Christ's sufferings. If it be said, that in the one case Christ suffers, as the substitute of the sinner; I answer, in the other case, he obeys as the substitute of the sinner. In the one case, Christ has by his sufferings made it consistent with the general good to pardon the sinner; in the other case, he hath made the same thing consistent with the general good, by his obedience. And if this circumstance, that the pardon of the sinner is consistent with the general good abolishes grace from his pardon in the one case, the same circumstance is productive of the same effect in the other. The truth is, that in both cases the whole grace of pardon consists in this, and this only, that the sinner is treated infinitely more favorably than is correspondent to his personal character.

Again; according to this scheme of the atonement, the pardon of the sinner is as wholly an act of grace, as if he had been pardoned without any atonement at all. If the sinner had been pardoned without any atonement, he would have been treated more favorably than is correspondent to his own character; so he is, when pardoned through the atonement of Christ. In the former case, he would be pardoned, without a payment of his debt; so he is in the latter. If the measures taken by God to secure the public good, those measures consisting neither in any personal doing or suffering of the sinner, nor in the payment of debt, be inconsistent with grace in the pardon of the sinner in the one case; doubtless whatever measures are taken by God to secure the public good in the other case, are equally inconsistent with grace in pardon. And no man will pretend, that if God do pardon the sinner without an atonement, he will pardon him in a way which is inconsistent with the public good. In this view of the objection, either the bare circumstance that the pardon of the sinner is consistent with the public good, is that which abolishes the grace of pardon; or it is the particular mode in which the consistence of pardon and the public good is brought about.

If the bare circumstance of the consistence of pardon and the public good, be that which abolishes the grace of pardon, then it seems, that in order that any pardon may be gracious, it must be inconsistent with the public good; and therefore the pardon of the sinner without any atonement, being by the concession of the objector a gracious act, is inconsistent with the general good of the universe, and with the glory and perfections of God, and therefore can never be granted by God, as long as he is possessed of infinite perfection and goodness, whereby he is necessarily disposed to seek the good of the universal system, or of his own kingdom.

Or if it be said, that it is the particular mode in which the consistence between pardon and the public good is brought about, which abolishes the grace of pardon; in this case it is incumbent on the objector to point out what there is in the mode which is opposed to grace in pardon. He cannot pretend that in this mode the debt of the sinner is paid, or that in repentance the sinner's personal character is so altered that he now deserves no punishment. If this were the case, there would certainly be no grace in his pardon. It is no grace, and no pardon, not to punish a man who deserves no punishment. If the objector were to hold, that the personal character of the sinner is so altered by repentance that he no longer deserves punishment, he would at once confute his own scheme of gracious pardon.

Neither can it be pretended, by the advocates for pardon without atonement, that there is any grace in pardon, in any other view than this, that the sinner is treated more favorably than is correspondent to his personal character. And pardon, on such an atonement as Christ hath made, is, in the same view, an act of grace. So that if the true idea of grace, with respect to this subject be, a treatment of a sinner more favorably than is correspondent to his personal character, the pardon of the sinner through the atonement of Christ, is an act of pure grace. If this be not the true idea of grace, let a better be given, and I am willing to examine it; and presume that on the most thorough examination of the matter it will be found, that there is as much grace in the pardon of the sinner, through the atonement of Christ, as without any atonement at all. Surely it will not be pleaded, that it is no act of grace to treat a sinner more favorably than is correspondent to his own personal character; if such treatment be not more favorable than is correspondent to the personal character of some other man, or some other being; and that it is no act of grace in a prince to pardon a criminal, from respect to the merits of the criminal's father; or, that if Capt. Asgill had been the murderer of Capt. Huddy, there would have been no grace exercised in the pardon of Asgill, from respect to the intercession of the court of France.

On every hypothesis concerning the mode or condition of pardon, it

must be allowed, that God dispenses pardon from regard to some circumstance, or juncture of circumstances, which renders the pardon both consistent with the general good, and subservient to it: and whatever this be, whether the death of Christ, or any thing else, provided it be not the payment of money, and provided the personal character of the sinner be the same, it is equally consistent or inconsistent with grace in pardon.

In short, the whole strength of this objection, in which the Socinians have so much triumphed, that complete atonement is inconsistent with grace in the pardon of the sinner, depends on the supposition, that the atonement of Christ consists in the literal payment of a debt which we owed to God; and this groundless supposition being set aside, the objection itself appears equally groundless, and vanishes like dew before the sun.

Whatever hypothesis we adopt concerning the pardon of the sinner, whether we suppose it to be granted on account of the death of Christ; or on account of the obedience of Christ; or absolutely without any atonement; all will agree in this, that it is granted in such a way, or on such conditions only, as are consistent with the general good of the moral system; and from a regard to some event or circumstance, or juncture of circumstances, which causes pardon to be consistent with the general good. And that circumstance, or juncture of circumstances, may as well be called the price of pardon, the ransom of the sinner, &c., as the death of Christ. And whereas it is objected, that if God grant a pardon from respect to the atonement of Christ, we are under no obligation to God for the grace of pardon; I answer that whenever God grants a pardon, from respect to the circumstance or juncture of circumstances before mentioned, it may as well be pleaded, that the sinner so pardoned is under no obligations of gratitude to God on account of his pardon; for that it was granted from regard to the general good, or to that circumstance which rendered it consistent with the general good, and not from any gracious regard to him; or that if he be under any obligation to God, it is to him as the author of that circumstance or juncture of circumstances, which renders his pardon consistent with the general good, and not to him, as the dispenser of his pardon: as it is objected that if, on the scheme of pardon through the atonement of Christ, we be under any obligation to God at all, it is merely on account of the provision of the atonement, and not on account of pardon itself.

Perhaps some, loth to relinquish this objection, may say, Though it be true, that the pardon of the sinner, on account of the atonement of Christ, be a real act of grace; would it not have been an act of greater grace, to pardon absolutely, without an atonement? This question is capable of a twofold construction. If the meaning be, whether there would not have

been more grace manifested towards the sinner, if his pardon had been granted without any atonement? I answer, by no means; because to put the question in this sense, is the same as to ask, whether the favor of pardon granted without an atonement, would not be greater in comparison with the sinner's personal character, than it is when granted on account of the atonement of Christ? Or whether there would not have been a greater distance between the good of pardon, and the demerit of the sinner's personal character, if his pardon had been granted without an atonement, than if it be granted on account of the atonement of Christ? But the good, the safety, the indemnity of pardon, or of deliverance from condemnation, is the very same, in whatever way it be granted, whether through an atonement or not, whether in a way of grace or in a way of debt, whether from a regard to the merits of Christ, or the merits of the sinner himself. Again, the personal character of the sinner is also the same, whether he be pardoned through an atonement or not. If his pardon be granted without an atonement, it makes not the demerit of his personal character and conduct the greater; or if it be granted on account of the atonement of Christ, it makes not the demerit of his personal character the less. Therefore as the good of pardon is the same, in whatever way it be granted; and the personal character of the sinner pardoned is the same; the distance between the good of pardon, and the demerit of the sinner's character is also the same, whether he be pardoned on account of the atonement of Christ, or absolutely, without any atonement. Of course the pardon of the sinner is not an act of greater grace to him personally, if granted without regard to an atonement, than if granted from regard to the atonement of Christ.

But perhaps the meaning of the question stated above is, whether, if the sinner had been pardoned without an atonement, it would not have exhibited greater grace in the divine mind, or greater goodness in God; and whether in this mode of pardon, greater good would not have accrued to the universe. The answer to this question wholly depends on the necessity of an atonement, which I have endeavored briefly to show, in the preceding discourse. If an atonement be necessary to support the authority of the law and of the moral government of God, it is doubtless necessary to the public good of the moral system, or to the general good of the universe and to the divine glory. This being granted or established, the question just now stated comes to this simply; whether it exhibits greater grace and goodness in the divine mind, and secures greater good to the universe, to pardon sin in such a mode, as is consistent with the general good of the universe; or in such a mode as is inconsistent with that important object? a question which no man, from regard to his own reputation would choose to propose.

SERMON III.

INFERENCES AND REFLECTIONS.

IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS,
ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE.—Ephesians 1: 7.

HAVING, in the preceding discourses, considered the particulars at first proposed, which were, that we can obtain forgiveness in no other way than through the redemption of Christ,—the reason or ground of this mode of forgiveness,—and the consistency between the complete atonement of Christ, and free grace in forgiveness,—the way is prepared for the following inferences and reflections:—

If the atonement of Christ be a substitute for the punishment of the sinner according to the divine law, and were designed to support the authority of that law, equally as the punishment of hell; then we may infer, that the atonement of Christ does not consist in showing that the divine law is just. With regard to this, I venture to assert two things,—that the obedience and death of Christ do not prove that the divine law is just,—that if they did prove this, still, merely by that circumstance, they would make no atonement.

1. The obedience and death of Christ do not prove that the divine law is a just law. The sufferings of Christ no more prove this than the punishment of the damned proves it. The former are the substitute of the latter, and were designed, for substance, to prove and exhibit the same truths, and to answer the same ends. But who will say that the torments of the damned prove the justice of the divine law? No more is this proved by the sufferings of Christ. If the justice of the divine law be called in question, the justice and moral perfection of God is of course equally called in question. This being the case, whatever he can say, whether by obedience or suffering to testify the justice of the law, must be considered as the testimony of a party in his own cause; and also as

the testimony of a being whose integrity is as much disputed as the justice of the law. It cannot therefore be received as proof in the case. The testimony of God, whether given in obedience or suffering, so long as his character is disputed, as it will be so long as the justice of his law is disputed, proves neither that the law is just, in reality, nor that it is so in his own estimation. A being of a disputed character may be supposed to testify, both contrary to reality and contrary to his own knowledge. And as the character of the Deity is disputed by those who dispute the justice of the divine law, so there is the same foundation to dispute the character and testimony of the Son of God. Therefore the obedience and death of Christ do not prove that the divine law is just.

2. If the obedience and death of Christ did prove that the law is just, still, by this circumstance, they would make no atonement for sin. If it were a truth that the obedience and death of Christ did prove the divine law to be just, and merely on that account made atonement, the ground of this truth would be, that whatever makes it manifest that the law is just, makes atonement. The essence of the atonement on this hypothesis, is placed in the manifestation of the justice of the divine law. Therefore this manifestation, however or by whomsoever it be made, is an atonement. But as the law is really just, it was doubtless in the power of infinite wisdom to manifest the justice of it to rational creatures, without either the obedience or the death of Christ, or of any other person. If it were not in the power of infinite wisdom to manifest the justice of the divine law without the death of Christ; then if Christ had not died, but all men had perished according to the law, it never would have appeared that the law is just. But bare attention to the law itself, to the reason, ground, and necessity of it, especially when this attention is excited, and the powers of the mind are aided, by even such a divine influence as God does in fact sometimes give to men of the most depraved characters, is sufficient to convince of the justice of the law. But there can be no dispute, whether the sanctifying and savingly illuminating influences of the spirit of God, without the obedience and death of Christ, would convince any man of the justice of the law. We have no more reason to dispute this, than to dispute whether the angels who kept their first estate did believe the justice of the law before they were informed of the incarnation and death of Christ. According to this hypothesis, therefore, all that was necessary to make atonement for mankind was to communicate to them sanctifying grace, or to lead them to repentance; and as to Christ, he is dead in vain.

Besides; if the obedience and death of Christ did ever so credibly manifest the justice of the law, what atonement, what satisfaction for sin would this make? how would this support the authority of the law?

how would this make it appear that the transgressor may expect the most awful consequences from his transgression? or that transgression is infinitely abominable in the sight of God? And how would the manifestation of the justice of the law tend to restrain men from transgressing that law? Whatever the effect of such manifestation may be on the minds of those innocent creatures who have regard to justice or moral rectitude; yet, on the minds of those who are disposed to transgress and have lost the proper sense of moral rectitude, the manifestation would have no effectual tendency to restrain them from transgression; therefore would in no degree answer the ends of the punishment threatened in the law, nor be any atonement for sin.

Perhaps some may suppose that what hath now been asserted, that the death or atonement of Christ does not prove the justice of God and of his law, is inconsistent with what hath been repeatedly suggested in the preceding discourses, that it is an end of the death or atonement of Christ to manifest how hateful sin is to God. If the death of Christ manifest God's hatred of sin, it seems that the same event must also manifest God's love of holiness and justice. In answer to this I observe, that the death of Christ manifests God's hatred of sin and love of holiness in the same sense as the damnation of the wicked manifests these, namely, on the supposition that the divine law is just and holy. If it be allowed the divine law is just and holy, then every thing done to support and execute that law, is a declaration in favor of holiness and against sin; or a declaration of God's love of holiness and of his hatred of iniquity. Both the punishment of the damned, and the death of Christ declare God's hatred of all transgressions of his law. And if that law be holy, to hate the transgression of it, is to hate sin, and at the same time to love holiness. But if the law be not holy, no such consequence will follow: it cannot, on that supposition, be inferred from the divine hatred of transgression, that God either hates sin or loves holiness.

Again; we may infer from the preceding doctrine, that the atonement of Christ does not consist essentially in his active or positive obedience. By atonement I mean that which, as a substitute for the punishment which is threatened in the law, supports the authority of that law, and the dignity of the divine government. But the obedience of Christ, even in the most trying circumstances, without any tokens of the divine displeasure against the transgressors of the law, would never support the authority of the law and the dignity of the divine government. It by no means makes it appear that it is an evil and bitter thing to violate the law, and that the violation of it deserves, and may be expected to be followed, with most awful consequences to him who dares

to violate it. A familiar example may illustrate this matter. It is the rule or law of a certain family, that a particular child shall steadily attend the school kept in the neighborhood, and that if he absent himself for a day, without license, he shall feel the rod. However, after some time the child being weary of observing this law, does absent himself, and spend the day in play. At night the father being informed of it, arraigns the child, finds him guilty, and prepares to inflict the punishment which he had threatened. At this instant, the brother of the offending child intercedes, acknowledges the reasonableness of the law which his brother hath transgressed, confesses that he deserves the penalty, but offers himself to make satisfaction for his brother's offence. Being interrogated by what means he expects to make satisfaction, he answers, by going himself to school the next day. Now can any one suppose that in this way the second child can make satisfaction for the offence of the first? Or that if the father were to accept the proposal, he would find the authority of his law, and the government of his family, supported with dignity? Or that the offending child, or the other children of the family, would by this means be effectually deterred from future offences of the like nature? And however trying the circumstances of going to school may be, if those circumstances be no token of the father's displeasure at the disobedient child's transgression; still the going to school of the second child, will not make the least satisfaction for the offence of the first.

I venture to say further, that not only did not the atonement of Christ consist essentially in his active obedience, but that his active obedience was no part of his atonement, properly so called, nor essential to it. The perfect obedience of Christ was doubtless necessary in order to the due execution of his prophetic and priestly office, in order to his intercession; and also in order that the salvation of his disciples might be a reward of his obedience. But that it was necessary to support the authority of the divine law in the pardon of sinners, does not appear. If Christ himself could possibly have been a sinner, and had first made satisfaction for his own sin, it does not appear, but that afterward he might also satisfy for the sins of his people. If the pretender to the crown of Great Britain should wage war against king George, in the course of the war should be taken, should be brought to trial, and be condemned to the block; will any man say that the king of France, by becoming the substitute of the pretender, and suffering in his stead, could not make atonement for the pretender, so as effectually to support the authority of the British laws and government, and discourage all future groundless pretensions to the British crown? Yet the king of France could plead no perfect obedience to the British laws. Even the

sinner himself, but upon the supposition of the infinite evil of sin, could, by his own sufferings, atone for his sins. Yet he could not exhibit a perfect obedience.

Besides; if the bare obedience of Christ have made atonement, why could not the repentance and perfect obedience of Christ's people themselves have answered, instead of the obedience of Christ? Doubtless if they had suffered the penalty of the divine law, it would have answered to support the authority of the law, and the vigor of the divine government, as really as the death of Christ. And since the eternal sufferings of the people of Christ would have answered the same end of supporting the authority of the law as the sufferings of Christ; why would not the eternal perfect repentance and obedience of the people of Christ, have answered the same end, as his obedience in their behalf? If it would, both the death and obedience of Christ as our substitute, are entirely in vain. If the elect had only been converted, and made perfectly and perseveringly obedient, it would have answered every purpose both of the death and obedience of Christ. Or if the obedience of Christ in the flesh were at all necessary, it was not necessary to support the authority of the law and government of God; but merely as it was most wise that he should obey. It was necessary in the same sense only, as that the wind should, at this moment, blow from the north-east, and not from the south-west, or from any other quarter.

If the mere active obedience of Christ have made atonement for sin, it may be difficult to account for the punishment of any sinners. If obedience without any demonstration of divine displeasure at sin will answer every purpose of the divine authority and government, in some instances, why not in all instances? And if the obedience of sinners themselves will answer as really as that of Christ, why might not all men have been led by divine grace to repentance, and perfect subsequent obedience, and in that way been saved from the curse of the law? Doubtless they might; nor was there originally, nor is there now, without any consideration of the atonement of Christ, any other necessity of the punishment of any of mankind according to the law, than that which results from mere sovereign wisdom; in which sense, indeed, it was necessary that Christ should be given to be the Saviour of sinners, that Paul should be saved, and that every other event should take place, just as it does take place.

From our doctrine we also learn the great gain which accrues to the universe by the death of Christ. It hath been objected to the idea of atonement now exhibited, that if the death of Christ be an equivalent to the curse of the law, which was to have been inflicted on all his people;

then there is on the whole no gain, no advantage to the universe; that all that punishment from which Christians are saved, hath been suffered by Christ, and therefore that there is just as much misery and no more happiness, than there would have been, had Christ not died. To this I answer,

1. That it is not true that Christ endured an equal quantity of misery to that which would have been endured by all his people had they suffered the curse of the law. This was not necessary, on account of the infinite dignity of his person. If a king were to condemn his son to lose an ear or a hand, it would doubtless be esteemed, by all his subjects, a proof of far greater displeasure in the king, than if he should order some mean criminal to the gallows; and it would tend more effectually to support the authority of the law, for the violation of which this punishment should be inflicted on the prince.

2. That if it were true that Christ endured the very same quantity of misery which was due to all his people; still, by his death, an infinite gain accrues to the universe. For though the misery, on this supposition, is in both cases the same, and balances itself; yet the positive happiness obtained by the death of Christ, infinitely exceeds that which was lost by Christ. As the eternal Logos was capable of neither enduring misery, nor losing happiness, all the happiness lost by the substitution of Christ, was barely that of the man Christ Jesus, during only thirty-three years, or rather during the three last years of his life: because it does not appear, but that during the rest of his life he was as happy as men in general, and enjoyed as much or more good than he suffered evil. But the happiness gained by the substitution of Christ, is that of a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, kindreds, and people, and tongues. Rev. 7: 9. Now if the happiness of one man for three years, or at most for thirty-three years, be equal to that of an innumerable multitude throughout eternity, with the addition of the greater happiness which Christ himself must enjoy now that he has brought so many sons to glory, beyond what he would have enjoyed, if all these had been plunged in inconceivable and endless misery; then it may be justly said, on the present hypothesis, that by the substitution of Christ no advantage is gained to the universe. But if the latter infinitely exceed the former, the gain to the universe, even on the supposition that the sufferings of Christ were equal to those to which all his people were exposed, is infinite.

I may also hence take occasion to oppose an opinion which appears to me erroneous; which is, that the perfect obedience of Christ was in a great measure designed to show us, that the divine law may be obeyed by men. It shows, indeed, that it may be obeyed by a man in personal union with the divine nature. But how does this show that it may be

obeyed by a mere man? If we should also allow that it shows, that a man born into the world in perfect innocence, and who is not a fallen creature, may obey the law; yet how does this prove that it may be obeyed by a fallen creature, dead in trespasses and sins? It is an undoubted truth, that there is no inability in men to obey the law, except that which is of a moral nature, consisting in the disinclination or disaffection of their own hearts, which does not in the least excuse them in their disobedience. But this is manifest by other considerations than the perfect obedience of Christ; if it were not, it would not be manifest at all.

Another remark which naturally offers itself in discoursing on this subject is, that Christ's obedience to the precepts of the law, without submitting to the curse, would by no means prove the justice of that curse. This is the idea of some: that God sent his Son into the world, to obey the precepts of the law, and that his mere obedience of these proves the justice both of the precepts and of the penalty of the law. I have already given the reasons by which I am made to believe, that the obedience of Christ does not prove the precepts of the law to be just. But if it did prove the precepts to be just, it would not therefore prove the penalty too to be just. As the precepts of any law may be just and reasonable, yet may be enforced by a penalty which is unjust and cruel; so the proof that the precept is just, does not at all prove but that the penalty may be unjust and cruel. Indeed as the penalty of any law is designed to support and enforce the precept of that law, so to prove the justice of the penalty, proves the justice of the precept; because not the slightest penalty can be just, when applied to enforce an unjust precept. But this rule when inverted, doth not hold good. To prove the justice of a precept, does by no means prove the justice of the penalty by which that precept is enforced. So that if Christ have proved the precepts of the divine law to be just, this by no means infers the justice of its penalty. On the other hand, if Christ came to prove the justice of the law, and all that he has done to this effect have an immediate reference to the precepts only; and if he have done nothing to establish the justice of the penal part, considered by itself; the aspect of the whole will be, that the penal part is unjustifiable, and that for this reason he did not pretend to justify it.

The subject which hath been under our consideration also shows us, in what sense the sufferings of Christ were agreeable to God. It has been said, that it is incredible that mere pain should be agreeable to a God of infinite goodness; that therefore the sufferings of Christ were agreeable to God only as a proof of the strength of the virtue of Christ, or of his disposition to obey the divine law. If by mere pain be meant pain abstracted from the obedience of Christ, I cannot see why it may not be agreeable to God. It certainly is in the damned; and for the

same reason might have been, and doubtless was, in the case of our Lord. The Father was pleased with the pains of his Son, as they were necessary to support the authority of his law and government, in the salvation of sinners.

Another reflection naturally suggested by this subject is, that in punishing some sinners according to the curse of the law, and in requiring an adequate atonement in order to the salvation of others, God acts, not from any contracted, selfish motives, but from the most noble benevolence and regard to the public good. It hath often and long since been made a matter of objection to the doctrines of the future punishment of the wicked, and of the atonement of Christ, that they represent the Deity as having regard merely to his own honor and dignity, and not to the good of his creatures, and therefore represent him as deficient in goodness. But can it be pretended to be a proof of goodness in God, to suffer his own law, which is the perfect rule of virtue, to fall into contempt? However it might afford relief to some individuals, if God were to suffer his moral kingdom to be dissolved; can it be for the general good of the system of his creatures? Is it not manifestly necessary to the general good of the created system, that God's moral kingdom be uphelden? and that therefore the authority of the divine law, and vigor of the divine government be maintained? If so, then it is also necessary to the general good that punishments be inflicted on the disobedient and lawless; or that they be pardoned in consequence only of a proper satisfaction or atonement.

So that those very doctrines which of all others are made matter of the most objection to the divine goodness or benevolence, are clear proofs of goodness, and are absolutely necessary to it. If a prince should either make no laws for the government of his subjects, or should never execute them, but should suffer all crimes to pass with impunity, you would by no means esteem him a good prince, aiming at the good of his subjects; you would not hesitate to pronounce him either very weak or very wicked.

In reflecting on this subject, we may notice the reason why so many who profess to be advocates for the doctrine of atonement, yet place the atonement in that in which it does by no means consist. The principal reason seems to be, that they have conceived that the idea of Christ's having suffered an equivalent to the punishment to which all his people were exposed, is inconsistent with grace in their pardon. But if I have been so happy as properly to state the ideas of justice and grace, it appears that there is as much grace in the pardon of sinners on account of such an atonement as that just mentioned, as there would be on account of an atonement consisting in mere obedience; or as there would be in pardon without any atonement at all.

Hence also we see, that the death of Christ in our stead, is not useless or in vain. The opposers of Christ's substitution and atonement assert, that no good end is answered by the sufferings of an innocent, amiable, and virtuous person, in the stead of the guilty. But surely to support the authority of the law and of the moral government of God, is not a vain or unimportant end. It was not in vain that Zaleucus, having made a law that all adulterers should have both their eyes put out, and his own son being the first who transgressed, put out one of his own eyes and one of his son's. Hereby he spared his son in part, and yet as effectually supported the authority of his law, as if it had been literally executed. Nor was it in vain that, during the late war, a soldier in the American army, of a robust constitution, pitying his fellow-soldier of a slender constitution, who was condemned to receive a certain number of stripes, petitioned to be put in the place of the criminal, and actually received the stripes.* For the authority of the martial law was effectually supported, and perhaps by this means, the life or future health and service of the criminal were preserved, which would otherwise have been lost.

Neither was the death of Christ, in the stead of sinners, any injury done to an innocent person. As well may we say that Zaleucus, or the soldier just mentioned, were injured; or that a man is injured when another man receives the money of him, which he voluntarily tenders in payment of the debt of a third person; or that a man is injured by the surgeon, who takes off his leg to preserve his life, the man himself consenting, and desiring him so to do.

Again; we may observe in what sense justice and the divine law are satisfied by the death of Christ; and in what sense the atonement of Christ is properly called a satisfaction. It is only the third kind of justice before mentioned, that is satisfied by the death of Christ. No man, for the reasons already given, will pretend that commutative justice is satisfied by Christ; for the controversy between God and the sinner is not concerning property. Nor is distributive justice satisfied. If it were, there would indeed be no more grace in the discharge of the sinner, than there is in the discharge of a criminal, when he hath endured the full punishment to which, according to law, he hath been condemned. If distributive justice were satisfied, it would have no further claim on the sinner. And to punish him, when this kind of justice has no claim on him, is to treat him more unfavorably or severely than his personal character deserves. If so, the penitent believer, considered in his own person, deserves, even according to the strictness of the divine law, no punishment;

* This, I am informed, was real fact.

and that merely because he repents and believes: and if so, repentance and faith satisfy the law, or are the curse of it, as I have already shown. If distributive justice be satisfied, it admits of no further punishment, and to punish him further, would be as positively unjust, as to continue a man's punishment, after he hath endured the full penalty of any law. If distributive justice be satisfied by Christ, in the behalf of sinners, then the rule of distributive justice is not the personal character of a man, but the character of his friend, his advocate, or representative; any man has a right, on the footing of distributive justice, to be treated according to the character of his friend or representative. Therefore if a subject rebel against his sovereign, and procure a man of a most unexceptionable and amiable character, to represent him and plead his cause before his sovereign, he has a right, on the footing of distributive justice, to be treated according to the character of his representative; and if he be not thus treated, he suffers an injury; he is abused. On this principle, no prince or magistrate will have a right to punish, for any crime, a subject who can procure a man of a virtuous life to represent him and plead his cause.

But perhaps it will be said, that distributive justice is satisfied by the death of Christ, because he placed himself in our stead, and suffered in our room; and that whenever a person thus substitutes himself for another, and suffers the punishment due to that other, that other hath a right to a discharge, as distributive justice is then satisfied. Now, according to this objection, the true idea of distributive justice is, to treat a man either according to his own sufferings, or according to the sufferings of his representative. And if according to the sufferings of his representative, why not according to the obedience of his representative? And this brings us just where we were; that every man may, in justice, demand to be treated according to the character of his representative; which is absurd.

Distributive justice, therefore, is not at all satisfied by the death of Christ. But general justice to the Deity and to the universe is satisfied. That is done by the death of Christ which supports the authority of the law, and renders it consistent with the glory of God and the good of the whole system, to pardon the sinner.

In the same sense the law of God is satisfied by the death of Christ; I mean as the divine glory and the general good, which are the great ends of the law, are secured. In this sense only is the atonement of Christ properly called a satisfaction; God is satisfied, as by it his glory and the good of his system are secured and promoted.

Objection. But is not distributive justice displayed in the death of Christ? *Answer.* The question is ambiguous; if the meaning be, is not

distributive justice satisfied? I answer, for the reasons already given, in the negative. If the meaning be, is there not an exhibition made in the death and sufferings of Christ, of the punishment to which the sinner is justly liable? I answer in the affirmative: distributive justice is, in this sense, displayed in the death of Christ. But it is no more displayed, than the punishment of the sinner is displayed in the death of Christ.

It may be proper here to notice the sense in which justice admits of the salvation of sinners. It hath been said, that justice admits of several things which it does not demand; that it admits of the salvation of Paul, but does not demand it. And it would admit also of the damnation of Paul, but does not demand that. But in these instances the word justice is used in two very different senses, which ought to be carefully distinguished. When it is said justice admits of the salvation of Paul, the third kind of justice before described must be intended. The general good admits it; neither the glory of God, nor the good of the system, opposes it.

But distributive justice, which requires every man to be treated according to his personal character, does not admit that Paul should be saved; so far as this kind of justice says any thing concerning this matter, it demands that Paul be punished according to law: and if this justice be made the rule of proceeding in the case, Paul will inevitably be cast off. This kind of justice no more admits of the salvation of Paul than it admits of the salvation of Judas. But it is said, that "justice admits of the salvation of Paul, but does not demand it." Justice to the universe does demand it, as fully as admit of it, and the universe would suffer an injury, if he were not to be saved; but justice to the universe neither demands nor admits of the salvation of Judas. Whereas distributive justice to Paul personally, as much demands that he be not saved, as that Judas be not saved.

But if we will make a distinction between what justice admits and what it demands, the true and only distinction seems to be this: justice admits of any thing which is not positively unjust; of any favor, however great or manifold; but it demands nothing but barely what is just, without the least favor, and which, being refused, positive injustice would be done. Distributive justice, then, admits of the salvation of Judas or of any other sinner, as surely no injustice would be done Judas in his salvation; but it demands not this, as it is a mere favor, or something beyond the bounds of mere justice; or it is no injury to Judas, that he is not saved. Neither does distributive justice demand the salvation of Paul. But public justice both admits and demands both the salvation of Paul and the damnation of Judas. On the other hand, it neither

admits nor demands the damnation of Paul, nor the salvation of Judas. But distributive justice, according to the present distinction between the meaning of the words admit and demand, though it admits both of the salvation and damnation of both Paul and Judas, yet demands neither the salvation nor damnation of the one or the other; or, to express the same thing in other words, no injustice would be done either to Paul or Judas personally, if they were both saved or both damned. Distributive justice never demands the punishment of any criminal, in any instance; because no injury would be done him, if he were graciously pardoned. It demands only that a man be not punished being innocent; or be not punished beyond his demerit; and that he be rewarded according to his positive merit.

These observations may help us to understand a distinction, which to many hath appeared groundless or perplexing; I mean the distinction of the merit of condignity and merit of congruity. Merit of both these kinds refers to rewards only, and has no reference to punishments; and that is deserved by a merit of condignity which cannot be withholden without positive injury. That is deserved by a merit of congruity which is a proper expression of the sense which the person rewarding has, of the moral excellency of the person rewarded; which, however, may be withholden without positive injury. Of the former kind is the merit, which every good and faithful citizen has, of protection in his person, liberty, and property, and the merit of a laborer who has earned his wages. These cannot be withholden without positive injury. Of the latter kind is the merit, which some eminently wise and virtuous citizens have, of distinguishing honors or marks of esteem. If these be withholden, the proper objects of them may, indeed, be said to be neglected, but not positively injured.

This subject teaches, also, in what sense God was under obligation to accept, on the behalf of the sinner, the mediation and atonement of Christ. It hath been said, that when Christ offered to make atonement for sinners, God was under the same obligation to accept the offer, as a creditor is to accept the proposal of any man who offers to pay the debt of another. This is not true; because, in matters of property, all that the creditor hath a right to is his property. This being offered him, by whomsoever the offer be made, he has the offer of his right; and if he demand more, he exceeds his right; and he has no more right to refuse to give up the obligation, on the offer of a third person to pay the debt, than to refuse the same when the same offer is made by the debtor himself. All will own, that if a creditor were to refuse to receive payment and give up the obligation when the debtor offers payment, it would be abusive and unjust; and let any man assign a reason why it is not

equally abusive and unjust, not to receive the payment and to give up the obligation when payment is offered by a third person.

But it is quite otherwise in atoning for crimes in which distributive, not commutative justice, is concerned. As the rule of distributive justice is the personal character of the person to be rewarded or punished, and not property; if a magistrate refuse to accept any substitute, and insist on punishing the criminal himself, he treats him no otherwise than according to his personal character, and the criminal suffers no injustice or abuse. Nor is the magistrate under any obligation of distributive justice, or justice to the criminal himself, to accept a substitute.

It is true, that the circumstances of the case may be such that it may be most conducive to the public good that the offered substitute be accepted; in this case wisdom and goodness or public justice will require that it be accepted, and the criminal discharged.

This leads me to observe that it hath also been said, that when Christ offered to become a substitute and to make atonement for sinners, God was under no obligation to accept the proposal. This, I conceive, is as wide of the truth, as that he was under the same obligation to accept the proposal, as a creditor is to accept the proposal of a third person to pay the debt of his friend. The truth is, the glory of God and the greatest good of the moral system did require that Christ should become a substitute for sinners, and that his offered substitution should be accepted by God. This was dictated and recommended by both wisdom and goodness. So far, therefore, as wisdom and goodness could infer an obligation on the Father to accept the substitution of his Son, he was under obligation to accept it. But this obligation was only that of the third kind of justice before explained, a regard to the general good.

This subject further teaches us, that that constitution which requires an atonement in order to the pardon of the sinner is nothing arbitrary. That divine constitution which is wise and good, as being necessary to the good of the moral system, is not arbitrary. But if an atonement was necessary, in order to support the authority of the divine law, and the honor, vigor, and even existence of the divine moral government, while sinners are pardoned, undoubtedly that constitution which requires an atonement in order to the pardon of the sinner, is the dictate of wisdom and goodness, and by no means of an arbitrary spirit.

Hence we also learn in what sense the death of Christ renders God propitious to sinners. It does so only as it supports the authority of his law and government, and renders the pardon of sinners consistent with the good of the system and the glory of God.

Finally; this subject teaches the groundlessness of that objection to the doctrine of atonement, that it represents the Deity as inexorable. If

to refuse to pardon sinners unless it be in a way which is consistent with the good of the moral system, is to be inexorable; then that God will not pardon sinners without atonement, or in a way which is consistent with the authority of his law, and with the authority and even existence of his moral government, is indeed a proof that God is inexorable. But unless it be an instance of inexorability that God will not pardon sinners, unless it be in a way which is consistent with the good of the moral system, there is no ground to object to the doctrine of atonement, that it represents the Deity as inexorable. On the other hand, that God requires an atonement in order to pardon, is an instance and proof of truly divine goodness; and if he were to pardon without an atonement, it would prove that he is destitute of goodness, and regardless not only of his own glory, but of the true happiness of the system of his moral creatures.

TWO SERMONS.

I.

JUSTIFICATION THROUGH CHRIST, AN ACT OF FREE GRACE.

II.

THE LAW IN ALL RESPECTS SATISFIED BY OUR SAVIOUR, IN REGARD
TO THOSE ONLY WHO BELONG TO HIM ; OR, NONE BUT BELIEVERS
SAVED THROUGH THE ALL-SUFFICIENT SATISFACTION OF CHRIST.

BY

JOHN SMALLEY, D.D.

SERMON I.

JUSTIFICATION THROUGH CHRIST, AN ACT OF FREE GRACE.

BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE, THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN
CHRIST JESUS.—Romans 3: 24.

THE point labored in the preceding part of this epistle, is the impossibility of salvation for any of mankind, on the footing of mere law, or of personal righteousness. The apostle hath proved that both Jews and Gentiles were all under sin; and hence he infers, as the necessary consequence, that, “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.” This point being established, that the original way of life was now forever barred against the race of fallen man, the apostle proceeds, for the comfort of sinners, to open to view the gospel method of justification through a Redeemer. See the context, verse 21, and onward. “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

It is of the last importance that this new way of access into the divine favor, and of obtaining eternal life, should be rightly explained. By many it has been so misunderstood as either to make void the law, or to frustrate the grace of the gospel, or both. Some speculative inaccuracies also, it appears to me, respecting justification through the atonement and righteousness of Christ, have been inadvertently adopted by many, if not most, of the orthodox, of which men of erroneous sentiments have availed themselves to very pernicious purposes.

The great difficulty respecting this subject, to which I design to pay particular attention at present, is, how to reconcile the full satis-

faction of Christ, with the free grace of God in the pardon of sin and the justification of sinners. It is proposed, agreeably to the words before us,

1st. To explain gospel justification.

2d. To consider how this is through the redemption of Christ. And,

3d. To show that still it is of the free grace of God.

But on the last of these heads I mean mainly to insist.

I. I shall endeavor very briefly to explain what we are here to understand by being justified.

Justification literally signifies judging one to be just. A man is said to justify himself when he asserts his own innocence, or denies that he has been to blame in any instance. So one is said to justify another when he stands up for him, or undertakes his vindication. Among the Jews this was a law phrase, or was used in reference to their courts of judicature. See Deut. 25: 1; "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked."

From this judicial use of the word, it came to be applied to the case of mankind, in regard to the sentence of the Supreme Judge. The legal justification of man, had he persevered in perfect rectitude, would have been the sentence of his Maker, pronouncing him righteous, and confirming him in immortal happiness. But gospel justification—the justification of fallen men before a holy and just God, must be supposed to have something peculiar in it. The application of the word to this case, must be understood as borrowed and figurative; yet the thing intended is sufficiently analogous to the primary meaning of the phrase to well warrant this metaphorical use. It bears a resemblance to the legal and literal justification of the righteous in the two most essential points. It implies an acquittance from sin as exposing to eternal death, and the grant of a sure title to everlasting life.

1st. Gospel justification implies an acquittance from all sin, as exposing to eternal death. To this purpose see Acts 13: 38, 39; "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." In the Mosaic law, provision was made for cleansing persons from ceremonial, but not from moral, transgressions. Not from sin, the apostle to the Hebrews observes, "as pertaining to the conscience." Hence David says, Psalm 51: 16, "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it." That is, there were no sin-offerings instituted for such crimes as those of which he had been guilty. But through the atonement of Christ believers are justified from all things. His "blood cleanseth from all sin." Accordingly we read, Rom. 8: 1,

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." That is, no condemnation to eternal death. Not that there is no kind of condemnation to those who are justified according to the new covenant. The best saints are liable to temporal punishments, notwithstanding their justification. Moses and David and Hezekiah were condemned for their sins, and sorely punished for them in this world, though good men, and interested in the covenant of grace. And St. Paul, reproving the Corinthians for their unworthy attendance on the Lord's Supper, says, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Believers, by being justified, are not exempted from all expressions of the divine displeasure. The pardon implied in this gracious act of God is only a discharge from the condemnation of the wicked; that is, from future and eternal punishment. But,

2d. Gospel justification implies the grant of a sure title to eternal life.

This is more than merely being delivered from the curse of the law. Adam, before his fall, was perfectly free from all condemnation; but he was not confirmed in the divine favor. He was placed in a state of probation with only a conditional promise of final happiness. If he obeyed he was to live; if he disobeyed he was to die. And he had no assurance of effectual grace to preserve him from final apostasy and perdition. In this last respect, the case of those who are justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus is essentially different. Indeed, some have supposed that believers in Christ, have, in this life, only conditional promises of final salvation. Nor can it be denied that persevering obedience of the gospel is made necessary in order to eternal life. It is written, "The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. He that endureth to the end," says Christ, "the same shall be saved. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

From such passages as these many have been led to suppose, that all the promises of the second covenant, like those of the first, are only conditional, and depend upon the mutable will of man for their ultimate accomplishment. But texts enough may be produced, which assert the absolute safety of all who are once justified by faith. Justification and glorification are spoken of as infallibly connected, Rom. 8: 30; "Whom he justifieth, them he also glorifieth." And our Saviour says, John 5: 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation."

Nor are these at all inconsistent with those other texts, which imply that none shall be saved at last, but such as obey the gospel to the end of life. For perseverance in faith and holiness may be made absolutely sure in the first justification. And that this is actually the case is most evident from Scripture. Christ says of his sheep—of all who “hear his voice, and follow him, I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” Those who truly believe, we are taught, are not of them that draw back unto perdition. They are said to be “kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.” We may be confident of this very thing, according to the apostle, that he who hath begun a good work in any one—a work of faith with power—he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. From these passages, and many more in the New Testament, it appears evident enough that those who have once obtained Gospel justification, are not only put into a new state of trial upon a milder constitution, according to which it is possible they may be finally saved; but that their salvation is made infallible, by this better covenant, established upon better promises; this everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.

II. I proceed to speak of the redemption of Christ, the essential ground of gospel justification.

To redeem, signifies to deliver; more strictly, and most commonly, to deliver by ransom. There were various laws in Israel concerning redemptions: the redemption of lives, of lost inheritances, and of persons sold to slavery. Every first-born male, according to law, was the Lord's; but the first-born of man, and the firstlings of certain beasts might not be sacrificed; provision was therefore made for their being redeemed by the substitution of others in their stead. See *Exod. 13: 13*; “Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck; and all the first-born of man amongst thy children shalt thou redeem.” With regard to the redemption of inheritances, see *Lev. 25: 25*; “If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother had sold.” Of the redemption of Israelites who had sold themselves, see the same chapter, *ver. 47–49*; “And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger; after that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: either his uncle, or his uncle's son may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or, if he be able, he may redeem himself.”

In allusion to these and such like redemptions in Israel, Christ is

called our Redeemer, and is said to be made of God unto us redemption. Agreeably to these different instances and ways of redeeming, the redemption that is in Jesus Christ may be understood as comprehending, both the merit of his obedience, and the manifestation of divine justice made by his sufferings, in our nature and stead. We were waxen poor; our eternal inheritance was alienated; and such was the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who "was rich, that for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." He took upon him the form of a servant — the nature and place of man, and, in that nature and capacity, obeyed perfectly his Father's law as man ought to have done, that "by his obedience many might be made righteous," and obtain the inheritance of eternal life. We had sold ourselves; the Son of Man therefore, our kinsman, came to seek and to save—to ransom and redeem us. Hence we are said to be bought with a price; and to be redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. We were devoted to utter destruction; for it is said, "The soul that sinneth it shall die; and, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Christ therefore suffered for us, the just for the unjust. He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

What rendered the vicarious obedience and sufferings of our Saviour necessary, was, that we might have remission of sins and the rewards of the righteous, and yet the honor of the divine law and government be maintained. "To justify the wicked, is abomination to the Lord. He will by no means clear the guilty." This were to countenance iniquity, and to cast an indelible slur on his own glorious character. It were to bring the eternal law of righteousness, and the eternal Lawgiver of the universe into disregard and contempt. God had given a law which was holy and just and good. He had enforced this law with infinite sanctions, that it might be forever observed and had in reverence. This law had not been fulfilled by man, and therefore the reward of righteousness could not be given him. This law had been openly violated by man, and therefore the penalty of transgression and disobedience must be inflicted upon him. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Better never to give a law, than to let the violation of it pass with impunity. But the holy law of God was not rashly given. His own glory, and the good of the moral creation, required that there should be such a law, and that the dignity of it should be supported. A lawless, licentious universe were infinitely worse than none. Hence heaven and earth might sooner pass away, or be annihilated, than the divine law be made void, or one tittle of it fail and not be fulfilled.

But the letter of a law may possibly be deviated from, and yet the spirit of it be supported, and the design of it fully obtained. We are told of a certain ancient king (Zaleuchus, king of the Locrians) who, that he might effectually suppress adultery, which exceedingly prevailed among his subjects, enacted a law that the adulterer should be punished with the loss of both his eyes. His own son was convicted of this crime. The royal father, whose bowels yearned for him, and who could not bear to have one so dear to him forever deprived of the light of day, devised an expedient to soften, in that one instance, the rigor of his own law, and yet not abate its force in future. The king in a most public manner, before all the people, had one of his own eyes plucked out, that so one of his son's eyes might be saved. By such a commutation as this, by redeeming one eye for his son, at so costly a price as the loss of one of his own, he conceived the law would appear as awful, and be as great a terror to evil-doers, as if the letter of it had been executed. And it must, I think, be acknowledged that, by this means, the king's inflexible determination to maintain government and punish transgression, was even more strikingly evinced than if he had suffered the law to have its natural course, and neither of his son's eyes had been spared. For some fathers have been without natural affection, but no man ever yet hated his own flesh. The apple of one's own eye must certainly be dear to him.

In like manner, we are to conceive of the redemption of Christ, as an astonishing expedient of infinite wisdom and goodness, that we transgressors might be saved, and yet God be just, and his righteous law suffer no dishonor. This is the constant account we have of the death of Christ in the holy Scriptures. Thus immediately after my text, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, &c. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." Thus Eph. 1:7; "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," &c.

But it was not enough that we should be redeemed from death. In order to our being heirs of God, and having an interest in the covenant of grace, it was necessary that the law as a covenant of works should be fulfilled; and so the forfeited inheritance of eternal life be redeemed. This our Saviour did by his active obedience. By his fulfilling all righteousness, a foundation was laid for God, to the eternal honor of his remunerating justice, to give grace and glory to all who believe in Christ and belong to him. Thus it is written, "He is made unto us righteousness."

These two things are implied in the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

The merit of his obedience, and the manifestation of the inflexibility of divine vindictive justice, made by his sufferings and death. And these two things were necessary in order to our being justified, and yet the spirit of the law be maintained, and God be just.

III. I proceed to show, that notwithstanding this plenteous redemption, we are dependent on the mere mercy of God, and our justification is still freely by his grace.

By grace is meant undeserved favor. This is the common acceptance of the word. The bestowment of any good which might justly not be bestowed, or not inflicting any evil which might justly be inflicted, is a matter of free grace. Indeed, in the New Testament grace may mean, doing good to those who deserve ill; this being actually the case with respect to all exercises of divine goodness towards fallen man. However, if it can be shown that no man has any claim to salvation upon the footing of justice, it will be sufficient to my present purpose. The thing therefore I now undertake to prove, and clear up, is this: That no man deserves eternal life, or even deliverance from eternal death, on account of any merit belonging to him, either personal or imputed.

The idea of personal merit is in general professedly exploded. All will own that the best man on earth, had he no better righteousness than his own, could have no other plea than that of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." But, on Christ's account, it has commonly been supposed, believers have a good plea even before the tribunal of divine justice. "It hath been said by them of old time," and also by some modern writers of very eminent note, that through the atonement of our divine Redeemer, if we have an interest in him, we deserve freedom from all condemnation; and that, through his all-perfect righteousness, we may demand eternal glory as our just due. Very express to this purpose is the following passage, in a late learned and most excellent author.* "The justice of God that required man's damnation, and seemed inconsistent with his salvation, now does as much require the salvation of those that believe in Christ, as ever it required their damnation. Salvation is an absolute debt to the believer from God, so that he may in justice demand and challenge it, not upon the account of what he himself has done; but upon the account of what his surety has done. For Christ has satisfied justice fully for his sin; so that it is but a thing that may be challenged that God should now release the believer from punishment; it is but a piece of justice that the creditor should release the debtor, when he has fully paid the debt. And again, the believer may demand eternal life, because it has been merited by Christ, by a merit of condignity."

* President Edwards. First set of Posthumous Sermons, page 207.

Another extract I will here give you from the writings of a more ancient pious divine, containing the same sentiment, and expressed in still bolder terms. His words are as follows: "He [Christ] fully merited, by way of purchase and complete payment made unto divine justice, the removal of all that evil we had deserved, and the enjoyment of all that good we needed, and could desire; and that by a valuable consideration tendered into the hand of divine justice in that behalf. However it is out of free mercy and rich grace that redemption is given to us (for it is out of mercy that Christ is given, that he gave his life, that both are bestowed upon us and not upon the world); yet in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and the full payment he hath laid down, out of his own proper cost and charges, his own blood, it is justice it should be bestowed, and by justice it may be challenged, as that which he hath purchased in a righteous proceeding."

This he afterwards applies in a use of reproof to diffident believers, in the following words: "Why? have you laid down the purchase? Take possession then into your hand. Have you tendered the payment? Take the commodity. It is your own; nay, your due. He that knows at what the purchase will come, and hath the sum in sight, and under his hand, can lay it down upon the nail; pay it, take it; here is one and there is the other. Here is the blood of Jesus which thou art well pleased with, hast accepted of, therefore, Lord, give me my due: that comfort, that peace, that wisdom, that assurance, which I stand in need of." *

This notion of the atonement and imputed righteousness, it must be acknowledged, is frequently to be met with in our most orthodox books, though it may not be often improved just in the manner last quoted. But we may call no man master, or father. We must "search the Scriptures, whether those things be so." Where do we find our infallible Teacher, instructing his disciples to make such challenges from the Father, even on his account, of deliverance from all evil, and the bestowment of all good, as their just due? Did he not direct them humbly to pray, for even a competency of outward comforts, as of God's free gift: and for the pardon of their many offences, of his mere mercy? "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." He encouraged them indeed to seek unto God for all needed good, in his name, with an assurance of obtaining their requests; but he ever taught them to seek in the way of petition, not of demand. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever

* Mr. Thomas Hooker, first Minister in Hartford.

ye shall ask the Father, in my name, he will give it you." Did our Saviour, that we find, ever insinuate an idea that the salvation of his redeemed ones was of debt from the Father? Did he not, in the most explicit manner, acknowledge the contrary? "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Do the inspired apostles, in any of their epistles or discourses, teach us that the salvation of believers, or any part of it, is of justice to the exclusion of grace? Do they not constantly express themselves most clearly in opposition to this sentiment? "By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

The doctrine that justification, and all subsequent as well as antecedent blessings, are free gifts—matters of mere grace, is certainly a doctrine of Scripture. But still the great question remains; how is this doctrine self-consistent? The redemption that is in Jesus Christ implies full satisfaction for sin, and the highest possible merit of eternal life; how then can being justified through this redemption be of free grace? What grace can there be in cancelling a debt when full payment hath been made? or in liberating a captive when an adequate ransom hath been received? or in reconveying an alienated inheritance after ample recompense? how is this difficulty to be removed?

I answer; just as other difficulties are removed into which we are led by following the allusions and metaphors of Scripture too closely. We are not to imagine a resemblance, in all points, between the redemption of Christ, and redemptions among mankind, any more than we are in other instances when divine things are spoken of after the manner of men; any more than we are to imagine that God is angry just as we are, or that he repents just as we do, or that he hath an arm, and hands, and eyes like ours, because these things are ascribed to him in a figurative manner. From the use of the words ransom and redemption, we are no more obliged to suppose a literal purchase, or an obligatory satisfaction in what our Saviour did and suffered, than we are to suppose there was occasion for such kind of satisfaction, and for the same reasons as among men. We are selfish, and looking for gain every one from his quarter: but surely we ought not to form a like idea of the infinitely benevolent and ever-blessed God. Certainly, "He who so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believ-

eth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life," would have pardoned and saved the world without any atonement or vicarious righteousness, had nothing but want of goodness prevented. The thing was, sin could not be pardoned and sinners saved, consistently with just law and good government; and therefore not consistently with the glory of God or the good of the universe. The removal of this just obstacle to the reign of grace, not the laying God under obligation, for value received, was what rendered the redemption of Christ necessary: and the former of these, not the latter, is the end effected by his obedience and death.

It hath indeed been said, in the present dispute, that a door could not be opened for the salvation of mankind, without making it necessary in justice that they should be saved. That justice requires whatever is consistent with justice. But this is a new and strange position. The perfection of justice no more requires that every thing which is just should be done, than the perfection of truth requires that every thing which is true should be spoken. If justice required whatever is consistent with justice, no grace could be exercised — no free favor could ever be bestowed in any instance, either by God or man: nothing more than mere justice could ever be done. That justice which excludes grace, which is the only proper notion of justice, at least the only one now under consideration, certainly doth not require many things which might be just. Justice did not require that God should give his only begotten Son, yet this was consistent with justice. Christ was not obliged in justice to consent to become incarnate and to pour out his soul unto death, yet there was nothing inconsistent with justice in his so doing. In like manner it is now consistent with justice for God to pardon sinners through the propitiation of Christ, yet this is not what justice requires. Grace requires that the guilty should be forgiven, provided it may be done consistently with justice, and without doing hurt upon the whole; but this doth make it no more grace. Wisdom requires whatsoever things are for the best. Goodness requires whatsoever things are for the greatest universal good. But justice, as excluding grace, requires only whatsoever things are deserved.

Still, perhaps, it will be said, Were not the sufferings of Christ really adequate to all the punishment due to us for sin? and did not his obedience actually merit eternal life by a merit of condignity? and have not believers, at least, a just right and title to the atonement and merit of Christ? Is not his righteousness imputed to them so as to become actually theirs? And if these things be so, where can there be any grace in their justification? In answer to all this, let me observe the following things.

1. I do not think that eternal life was merited, even by Christ,

by a merit of condignity. A merit of condignity supposes something justly due for service done. But it is impossible, I apprehend, that God should receive any thing for which he is justly indebted. "For who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" However ancient divines may have discoursed about merit of condignity and merit of congruity, the distinction, I conceive, is properly applicable only to merit at the hands of beings who may receive actual services to which they have no just claim. A merit of condignity can, I am persuaded, have no place in regard to God.

That creatures can merit no good at the hand of their Creator, in this high sense of merit, every one must be convinced, on a moment's reflection. They can render nothing to God, in a way of love or service, but what is his due from them. Adam would not have deserved any reward as a just debt, had he remained innocent, and fulfilled the law of perfection. He would only have done what it was his duty to do. The highest created intelligences can do no more. As they derive their all from God, so they can render nothing to him but what is of right his.

But, it will be said, Christ was not a mere creature. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Consequently his merit must be of a different kind from what Adam's would have been, and from that of the angels. The labor of a servant cannot bring his master in debt, because it was that to which he had a just right; but if a neighbor, who is upon even terms with us, labor for us, we are indebted to him. He deserves wages, in the proper and strict sense of the word. And why must there not in reality be exactly this difference between the obedience of creatures, and the obedience of Christ?

To this I answer, though Christ was under no obligation to become incarnate, yet when he had assumed the form of a servant, it behoved him to fulfil all righteousness. All he did was obedience;—obedience justly due, on our account at least, if not on his own. God hath not received, even in this way, that to which he had no right, and for which he is really indebted. Did the merit of Christ as properly belong to us as if it had been our personal merit, we should have no ground to challenge eternal life, nor any reward, as our just due. Indeed, in that case, we should not deserve eternal death, nor any punishment. Therefore, I must add,

2. I do not think the merit of Christ is actually transferred to believers; or, that his righteousness is so imputed to them as to become, to all intents and purposes, their own righteousness. It is so far reckoned to them as to render it consistent and honorable for God, as above explained, to be reconciled to them, not imputing their trespasses by a rigorous, or an adequate personal punishment; but it is not so theirs as

to render them really deserving of good, or undeserving of evil. The apostle states a distinction between justification by works and by faith, making the former in some sense of debt, but the latter of grace entirely. Rom. 4: 2-5; "For if Abraham were justified by works he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. By this we are plainly taught that justification by a righteousness reckoned to us by faith, is of grace, in a manner different from justification by our own good works. That the man justified by personal righteousness would have ground for glorying as more deserving than other men, though not before God, as having really merited eternal life, or any good at his hand. Comparatively, the justification of such an one would be of debt; it would indeed be in part of absolute justice to the exclusion of grace: that is, as far as it implies only approbation, and acquittance from the curse of the law. The righteous deserve not to be condemned; and there is no grace in not punishing them. But to him who is personally guilty, and is justified by faith, in the righteousness of another, and in him who justifieth the ungodly, the whole is of grace. The apostle's reasoning evidently supposes that the righteousness of Christ doth not become, to all intents and purposes, the believer's own righteousness. For if it did, there could be no difference, as to ground for glorying, between being justified by faith and by works; and one would be just as much of debt as the other: nor could it be true, in any sense, that God justified the ungodly. But that there is not a strict and proper imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer—such an imputation as implies an actual transfer of merit, is plain from the whole tenor of the Scriptures, as far as they have any relation to this subject. It is evident from all that is said of the chastisements of believers, of their confessions, and of the remission of their sins. Were they as righteous as Christ was, — had they, in any way, a perfect righteousness, properly their own, they would have no sins to confess; they would deserve no punishment, and need no pardon. The truth is, our ill desert is not taken away by the atonement of Christ. That can never be taken away. Nor doth the obedience of Christ render us deserving of heaven, or undeserving of hell. When God justifies believers on Christ's account, he considers them still as ungodly: as ungodly he punishes them still in this world; and as well might he punish them with everlasting destruction in the world to come, were it not for his gracious promise to the contrary. Grace reigns with unabated lustre in our justification, and in the whole of our salva-

tion, notwithstanding its reigning through righteousness, because it is through a righteousness not our own.

Merit is ever personal. In the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. Another's having been righteous, doth not make me righteous, if I have not been so myself; nor can the sufferings of another make me faultless wherein I have been a sinner. Can a robber or murderer become innocent, because an innocent attorney or friend of his hath suffered the penalty he deserved? Certainly it is impossible. He must be, notwithstanding this, as vile, as great a criminal, as blameworthy, as ever he was. And so are all mankind, notwithstanding the sufferings, and notwithstanding the obedience of Christ.

Debts may be discharged by an attorney. Damages of any kind may be repaired by a third person. But moral turpitude is not to be wiped away in this manner. Ill desert is never thus removed. Merit and demerit, are things not to be acquired or lost by proxy. The consequences of the good or evil actions of one person may devolve upon another; not the righteousness or the criminality of them.

Our crimes were not transferred to Christ; only the sufferings for them. He suffered as a lamb, without blemish and without spot. So his righteousness is not transferred to us; only the benefits of it. He was numbered with transgressors, and treated as a sinner, though innocent. We are numbered with the righteous, and treated as the friends and favorites of the Most High, though ungodly. He deserved the praises of heaven, when he was made a curse—when forsaken and expiring on the cross. We deserve the pains of hell, when delivered from the curse of the law, and received into the embraces of everlasting love. There is no transfer of merit, or of demerit, one way or the other, only of their fruits and consequences.

Justice admitted of laying on Christ the sufferings due for our sins, because it was by his own free consent, and because the necessary ends of punishing would thereby be answered; not because he deserved those sufferings. So, on the other hand, justice now admits of our being saved on his account, not because, on any account, we deserve salvation, but only because by giving us remission of sins and the happiness of the righteous, no injury will be done, no damage will accrue to the universe. There is nothing to oblige God to have mercy on any of mankind, only his own wisdom and goodness. He can do it without any unrighteousness; and therefore, so it seemeth good in his sight. Hence we are pardoned—we are justified—we shall be glorified, freely by the grace of God, notwithstanding the ample foundation laid for all in the plenteous redemption which is in Jesus Christ.

All that now remains, is to point out some of the doctrinal and practical uses, of this important subject.

In the first place ; we may hence learn that the argument for the certain salvation of all men, from the sufficiency of the satisfaction and purchase of Christ, is inconclusive. According to the common notion of a literal satisfaction and strict purchase in the atonement and obedience of our Saviour, similar exactly to satisfactions and purchases in matters of *meum* and *tuum* (i. e. mine and thine) between man and man, this argument of the Universalists, on which the greatest stress is laid by some, would be exceedingly plausible : to me it appears, it would indeed be absolutely unanswerable. The argument stands thus. God is obliged in justice to save men as far as the merit of Christ extends : but the merit of Christ is sufficient for the salvation of all men ; therefore God is obliged in justice to save all. The minor proposition I dare not deny. I question not the sufficiency of the merit of Christ for the salvation of all mankind. I have no doubt but that, in this sense, Christ “ gave himself a ransom for all ; tasted death for every man ; and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.” The only thing therefore which I have to dispute in this argument, is the obligatoriness of the Redeemer’s merit, on the Supreme Being : or, that it is of such a nature as to afford any ground to demand salvation from God, as a just debt. Had the believer any right to challenge pardon and eternal life upon this footing, I see not but that all mankind would have the same. If the merit of Christ be such as obliges God, in point of justice to save all believers ; and if that merit be sufficient for the salvation of all men ; why is not God obliged in justice to save all men, whether believers or not ? He may be under engagements to some and not to others by gracious promise, predicated upon faith ; but if the obligation be in absolute justice, it must be solely on account of the merit of Christ ; and is no greater after a man has faith than before. And if there be merit enough in Christ for all, it obliges and must obtain the salvation of all, though all men have not faith. That alters not the case. Faith, or the want of faith, alters nothing in point of justice ; only in point of promise : unless the obligatory merit be in faith itself, not in the atonement and righteousness of Christ. If God cannot in justice lay any thing to the charge of the elect, nor inflict any punishment upon them, because Christ died for them : and if, in point of merit, Christ died for all men ; God cannot in justice lay any thing to the charge of any man, nor punish any man.

Thus the doctrine of certain universal salvation is established at once ; and established upon orthodox principles.

The argument, indeed, proves too much. More a great deal than any good man would wish : more, one would think, than any man in his senses could believe. It turns the tables entirely respecting obligation and grace

between God and man. According to it, all the obligation is now on God's part; all the grace is on ours! He is holden and justly stands bound to us; we are free from all obligation to him! All the debts of all mankind, both of duty and suffering, are forever cancelled! Christ hath done all their duty for them, as well as taken away all possible criminality from them! If they now love or serve God it is of mere gratuity! They are not at all obliged so to do! If he bestow upon them all the good in his power, to all eternity, it is of debt — absolute debt, in the highest sense of the word! He can do no more for them than by a merit of condignity hath been purchased for them, and is of absolute right due to them! These admirable consequences will follow from this notion of the atonement and merit of Christ, as necessarily as the doctrine of universal salvation. An argument which thus overthrows every thing — all law, as well as all grace, must certainly be fallacious, whether we were able to discover the fallacy of it or not. Yet some, it is said, are not to be terrified by such frightful consequences. They admit them, and plead for them. They allow, at least, and maintain, that men are not justly punishable by the Judge of all the earth, whatever iniquities they may commit; and that, in fact, no man is punished of God at all, nor ever will be. So firmly are they established in the belief that the foregoing argument is demonstration, and can never be confuted.

But must not the weak place in this invincible argument be made manifest to all men? I cannot but flatter myself, the attentive, candid Universalist must feel this firm ground give way under him. The hope of salvation built upon the idea that the holy Sovereign of the universe is obliged in justice to pardon and save the vilest of sinners, is certainly a very forlorn hope.

That believers themselves do not deserve eternal life, nor even deliverance from eternal death; — that God is under no kind of obligation, for value received, even to them, on any account whatever, seems plainly implied in our text, and hath been sufficiently illustrated, I conceive, in the preceding discourse. And if so, certainly he cannot be obliged in justice to save all men. Salvation is sincerely offered to all, if they will thankfully receive Christ as their Saviour, and penitently return, through him, to their Creator and their God. With regard to giving them a heart, or making them willing to do these things, God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. Surely "by sending his Son into the world, that the world through him might be saved," he hath not brought himself so infinitely indebted to mankind as to be in justice obliged to save all the world, whether they will or not.

Secondly. Hence we may see, that the Socinians have no reason to

object against the doctrine of atonement, as though it were irreconcilable with the doctrine of free grace, and represented God the Father as unforgiving, implacable, unmerciful.*

As many have explained the doctrine of atonement, I cannot say that these reproaches cast upon it by its adversaries, are altogether unjust. Were it right to conceive of it under the literal low notion of paying debts, or repairing damages, between man and man, it would indeed seem as if there were no proper remission of sins to believers, nor any mercy in granting them "deliverance from the curse of the law." But if we consider God as acting, in this great affair, in his own proper character as Supreme Ruler of the world; and requiring atonement in order to the salvation of guilty men, only for the support of public justice, and that he might still be a terror to evil doers, at the same time that he discovers himself "abundant in goodness and ready to forgive;" if we consider, moreover, that the demerit of sin is not at all taken away, nor the need of pardoning mercy lessened by vicarious sufferings; in a word, if the foregoing view of this subject be scriptural and just, what shadow of ground can there be for any such reproaches and objections?

Thirdly. Hence we are furnished with an easy solution of a difficulty which some have imagined respecting our being justified at all, on account of the active obedience of our Saviour. The difficulty is this. Christ, in his human nature, in which only he could obey, owed obedience on his own account, and therefore could have no merit by that means to be placed to the account of his followers as the ground of their justification. Hereupon some have supposed and taught, that the sufferings of Christ, to which he was under no personal obligation, are

* Dr. Priestley, a celebrated modern writer on the side of Socinianism, has much to say upon this head. He says, "We read in the Scriptures, that we are 'justified freely by the grace of God.' But what free grace, or mercy, does there appear to have been in God, if Christ gave a full price for our justification, and bore the infinite weight of divine wrath on our account? We are commanded to 'forgive others, as we ourselves hope to be forgiven;' and to be 'merciful as our Father, who is in heaven, is merciful.' But surely we are not thereby authorized to insist upon any atonement or satisfaction, before we give up our resentments towards an offending penitent brother. Indeed, how could it deserve the name of forgiveness if we did? It is impossible to reconcile the doctrine of satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ, with the doctrine of free grace, which, according to the uniform tenor of the Scriptures, is so fully displayed in the pardon of sin, and the justification of sinners. It is only from the literal interpretation of a few figurative expressions in the Scriptures, that this doctrine of atonement, as well as that of transubstantiation, has been derived; and it is certainly a doctrine highly injurious to God; and if we, who are commanded to imitate God, should act upon the maxims of it, it would be subversive of the most amiable part of virtue in men. We should be implacable and unmerciful, insisting upon the uttermost farthing."

the only meritorious ground of our acceptance unto eternal life. Or that all further than deliverance from the curse of the law is from the grace of God, and the merit of our own imperfect obedience.*

This imaginary difficulty, however, arises entirely from the supposed necessity of merit strictly purchasing good at the hand of God, and a merit properly transferable. According to that conception of the matter, it is certain Adam's obedience could have availed nothing in behalf of any but himself. He, unquestionably, was under personal obligation to yield the most perfect obedience to his Maker of which he was capable. Therefore had he remained innocent, and continued in all things given him in charge to do them, he could have had no merit of supererogation, to be reckoned to his posterity. Nor do I conceive that the man Jesus Christ, consistently with his personal duty to his Heavenly Father, could have done less than to have fulfilled all righteousness. On supposition a purchasing, transferable merit had been necessary, I do not therefore see how this difficulty could be fairly obviated. But from the things which have been said, it is abundantly evident, I apprehend, that no such merit was necessary, is scriptural, or possible. God may do honor to himself, as one that loves righteousness, by making multitudes happy out of respect to the tried virtue and obedience of one though that one have only done what it was his duty to do. All notions of supererogation, and of a fund of merit to be sold and bought, or any way communicated from one to another, proceed upon the maxims of commercial, not of rectoral justice. Every thing of this kind is going off entirely from the ideas of sin and duty, to those of debt and credit, damages and reparations.

Fourthly. From the foregoing view of the subject, we learn, that those who are justified in the gospel way, have nothing whereof to glory, but have all the reason in the world to be humble before God. They have merely a merit of congruity to plead in his presence; and that merit not at all their own.

Were "salvation an absolute debt to the believer from God, so that he might in justice demand and challenge it," to be clothed with humility, and to be a prostrate suppliant before the throne of grace, might, indeed, seem unbecoming, and quite out of character. Had Christ "merited, by way of purchase and complete payment, the removal of all that evil we had deserved, and the enjoyment of all the good we needed and could desire, and that by a valuable consideration tendered into the

* The above difficulty was started, and the above doctrine advanced, by a divine of some note in Germany the last century; who made a party considerable enough to be taken notice of by Dr. Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History. How he was answered, I think the Doctor hath not informed us.

hand of divine justice in that behalf;" and had we this "sum in sight, and under our hand," we might well assume a high tone, and say, "Here is one and there is the other." Our beggary would be at an end; nor would it suit with our affluent circumstances, to be so poor in spirit as to petition and pray. We might say to the Almighty, "We are lords, we will come no more unto thee:" or, coming, might be so laconic as only to say, "Lord, give us our due."

But, my brethren, "you have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus." Christians have not these heaven-debasing, self-exalting sentiments, in the bottom of their hearts, however they may speak unguardedly, or think inaccurately on some occasions. I dare say the venerable divines above quoted, did not mean so, neither did their hearts think so. They never prayed as though those things were true; they never felt as if they believed them. Such speculative notions of the atonement and imputed righteousness, owing originally to the strong figures of holy Scripture, literally understood, have been exceedingly common; and therefore have been received implicitly as unquestionable truths, by the learned as well as the illiterate; however inconsistent with innumerable other sentiments in which every true Christian is most firmly established. Certainly, by the law of faith, boasting is excluded. Certainly if our justification be freely by divine grace, we have nothing whereof to glory. We have as much reason to be humble—as much cause, with deep abasement, to confess our daily sins, and to implore the free remission of them—as much occasion to say, God be merciful to us sinners, as if we were not justified at all. The blood of atonement only gives us access to the mercy-seat. Let, then, all our feelings and all our thoughts, as well as our addresses to a holy God, be agreeable to this humiliating doctrine of our being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. God thus established his covenant with us, that we may remember, and be confounded, and never open our mouths any more for our shame, when, in this way, he is pacified towards us for all that we have done.

Fifthly. From what hath been said, we learn, nevertheless, that believers have as firm ground for hope and confidence in God, as if their justification were a matter of absolute debt. The new covenant is as everlasting, as well ordered in all things, and as sure, as if it were not at all a covenant of grace. The gospel plan of acceptance unto eternal life, is calculated, not in the least to mar our comfort, only to mortify our pride.

We have seen that there is no want of absolute promises to insure grace and glory to all true believers in Jesus Christ. "All the promises in

him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God." And we know, says the same apostle, "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We have access, through Christ, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Believers are as absolutely established in the divine favor and love, as if they were justified by the deeds of the law. Final remission of sins and eternal salvation are as fully secured to them, as if their ill desert were wholly done away, or as if they had even a merit of condignity and the Almighty were actually their infinite debtor. Hence another apostle is very bold, and saith, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Not that, on account of our confessions, or on any other account, we justly deserve to be forgiven. Deserved forgiveness is no forgiveness at all. The meaning can only be, that God will infallibly be just and true to his word. A faithful and just man will fulfil his promises, however gratuitous the things promised: how much more he who "is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent!" But, if his bare word were not enough, as the apostle observes, he hath added his "oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." We may, if we believe in God, and believe also in Christ, "come boldly (though as humble beggars) unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Sixthly, and lastly. Hence we should learn to love mercy, as well as to walk humbly with our God.

Had we the righteousness of Christ, as a perfect cloak for all our sins, so as to have no occasion for any forgiveness, it might more reasonably be expected that we should be unforgiving. Did we need no mercy, it would not be so very strange should we show none. But, my brethren, how far otherwise is the case with every one of us! Do we hope we are justified in the sight of a holy God? Be it so, it is "freely by his grace," even "through the redemption that is in Jesus." "If I justify myself," says holy Job, "mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." And indeed, as the same pious

man demands, "How should man be just with God?" By imputation it hath been supposed he might; but we have now seen that even through the atonement and righteousness of Christ, we can have no plea of not guilty: and personally we cannot surely stand in judgment, should he contend with us, "nor answer him one of a thousand."

Shall we then be strict to mark, and severe to revenge the trivial injuries or affronts we may receive from our fellow-creatures? Read, Christians, the striking parable of the ten thousand talents and the hundred pence; read, and tremble at the awful application of that parable. Remember that most reasonable exhortation of the apostle, which speaketh unto you as unto justified sinners, Eph. 4: 23; "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

SERMON II.

NONE BUT BELIEVERS SAVED, THROUGH THE ALL-SUFFICIENT
SATISFACTION OF CHRIST.

FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, TO EVERY ONE
THAT BELIEVETH. — Romans 10: 4.

THE capital argument of many who maintain that every one who believeth not shall be saved, we have particularly considered. That salvation is not a matter of just debt, on account of the redemption of Christ, hath been shown, it is presumed, beyond dispute. This then being supposed a settled point, that God is at liberty to “have mercy on whom he will have mercy;” it remains that we must have recourse to the revelation of his sovereign will in his holy word, as the only way to determine, whether all, or only a part of mankind, shall be saved.

Nothing can be concluded from the universal benevolence of God, unless we knew, as he does, what would be for the greatest universal good. At first thought it may perhaps be imagined, that if it be only consistent with justice for God to give grace and salvation to all men, his infinite goodness must necessarily incline him to save all. But it ought to be remembered, that the operations of infinite goodness are ever under the direction of infinite wisdom. God will give eternal life to every rebel creature, however deserving of eternal death, if it be best; otherwise he will not. Its being at his sovereign option whether to do a thing or not, by no means make it certain what he will think proper to do. He was no more obliged in justice to permit any sin or misery ever to take place, than he is now to permit some to be forever sinful and miserable. From his goodness and power, we should have been ready to conclude he would have prevented the former, as we now are that he will prevent the latter. “His thoughts are not our thoughts.” “How unsearchable are his judgments,” says the apostle,

“and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” Were our understanding infinite, we might be able to judge, with great certainty, what he will think proper to do, on all occasions: but this not being quite the case, all conjectures respecting his determination, from what appears most desirable to us, must be very precarious. From his perfections we may be certain, in general, that he will ever do that which is wisest and best: but what is wisest and best, on the large scale of his universal administration, he alone can be supposed a competent judge.

Not leaning, then, to our own understanding, in a matter so evidently too high for us, let us, with unbiassed minds, attend to revelation as our only guide on the important question, Who of fallen creatures shall be saved? Whether it seem good in the sight of God, to save mankind universally, without any conditions; or with certain limitations, and on certain terms. This question is so abundantly resolved in the inspired Scriptures, that to quote all the plain proofs that only particular characters in this world shall have any part or lot in the salvation of the next, would be to quote, as it were, the whole Bible. In the text now chosen, there is evidently implied a restriction of deliverance from the law to believers in the gospel; and in discoursing upon the words, among other things, occasion will naturally be given to adduce some part of the abundant Scripture proof, limited in opposition to universal salvation.

The apostle having spoken, in the preceding chapter, of the rejection of the Jews for their unbelief, he begins this with expressing his sincere concern for them, and his most devout wishes that they might be recovered from their delusion, and not be lost. Ver. 1; “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” However opposed any may be to us, we ought to feel entirely friendly towards them—to wish them no ill, but the greatest possible good. We ought also to entertain a charitable opinion concerning them, as far as the nature of the case will any way fairly admit. Such was the apostle’s charity in regard to his deluded countrymen. He had no doubt that many of them acted conscientiously in their zealous opposition to the gospel, really believing it to be subversive of the divine law, and a system not according to godliness. He was once of the same way of thinking, as he confessed before king Agrippa. “I verily thought with myself,” says he, “that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. “From his own experience, therefore, as well as from much personal acquaintance, he could testify for them that their way was right in their own eyes, though really very erroneous and wrong. Ver. 2; “For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according

to knowledge. He goes on to take notice whence their prejudices against the Christian revelation originated; namely, from wrong ideas of God. From not understanding his infinite and inflexible justice, the high demands of his holy law, and the absolute perfection required in order to legal justification in his sight. Ver. 3; "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Then in the text he observes, that the cause of righteousness, for which the Pharisees were so full of anxiety, was in safe hands. That effectual care had been taken that the law should sustain no dishonor, but that the spirit of it should be supported, and its ultimate design be fully obtained. "For," says he, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth." For the illustration of what is here asserted I propose,

I. To show, in general, how Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, and

II. In what respects he is so, in a particular manner, to believers in him.

I. shall endeavor to show, in general, how Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.

He was the end of the ceremonial law of the Jews, as that was wholly typical of him, and was abolished by his death. But I cannot think the apostle here speaks merely, if at all, of the ceremonial law. That he has reference to the eternal law of righteousness, seems intimated by the manner of expression in the text; and it is evident from the words immediately following. Ver. 5; "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them." The ceremonial law was never able to give life to those who trusted in the observance of it, however scrupulous and exact. It will therefore be incumbent on me to point out a sense, in which Christ is the end of the universal law of perfect righteousness; or of that law by the obedience of which innocent man might have obtained eternal life. He is not the end of this law in every sense which the carnal mind would wish, nor in several senses which many have supposed. More particularly,

1. It is certain Christ is not so the end of the moral law, that it is no longer obligatory on mankind, as a rule of duty. That our Saviour had no such design as this, and that no such thing was possible, he was careful to inform the world in his first public discourse,—his sermon on the mount. "Think not," says he, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Nor did he come to fulfil this holy law so as to make it lawful for us to live in the violation of it. We

do not, surely, cease to be in duty bound to love God or our neighbor, because Christ hath loved both, as much as they deserve. It is not become right for us to practise all iniquity, because he hath fulfilled all righteousness. By his having been perfectly obedient in our stead, we are not freed from all the obligation we should have been under to obey the commands of our Maker; nor from any part of it. We have as much duty which we ought to do, as if he had done nothing. He came to "save his people from their sins," not from their duty.

2. Christ hath not so saved his people from their sins, that they cease to have any guilt, or desert of punishment. As our obligation to obey is not removed by his obedience, so neither is our criminality when we transgress, taken away by his sufferings. We are not to conceive God sees nothing amiss in us, and is not at all displeased with us, do what we will, because the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin. The eyes of the Omniscient are not so dazzled but that he can see our ways, and our hearts, as they truly are; nor is the nature of things so altered by the atonement, that iniquity is become really blameless, and undeserving of divine wrath. I add once more on the negative side,

3. Christ is not so the end of the law, but that personal righteousness is still necessary in order to eternal life. Not only is perfect obedience as much our duty as ever, and all neglect or transgression as great an evil as ever; but sincere conformity in heart and life to the moral law, is so required on the gospel plan, that without it we cannot be saved. Of this we are abundantly assured. "Repent and be converted," says the apostle Peter, "that your sins may be blotted out. Follow peace with all men," says the apostle Paul, "and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Verily, verily," says our Saviour, "I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. And again, "I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." To the same purpose, having explained the moral law in a much stricter sense than the most rigid of the Jewish doctors, he concludes with saying, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand."

But in what sense, then, it will be asked, is Christ the end of the law for righteousness? I answer, He is the end of the law as a covenant of life; or as the term of justification or condemnation. That is, the end for which probationary obedience was required of man, in order to his confirmation, is answered by the obedience of Christ; and the end for which

death was threatened in case of any disobedience, is answered by the sufferings and death of Christ.

According to the original constitution, perfect obedience, through a certain space of trial, was made necessary in order to the justification of life. There was some important end proposed by this, most certainly ; otherwise the benevolent Creator would have confirmed our first parents, with all their posterity, in immortal happiness, without the hazard of a previous probation. The end which would have been answered by man's trial, had he persevered in innocence, may easily be conceived. Virtue would have been encouraged and had in eternal honor ; and God, by crowning it with an eternal weight of glory, would have illustriously manifested his infinite love of righteousness. When man had sinned, he must, according to law, have been punished with everlasting destruction. Here again some good end, undoubtedly, was in view. God delighteth not in the death of the wicked. The misery of his creatures, however justly merited, cannot be an ultimate object to a Being whose name, and whose nature is love. The end of the awful threatening and curse of the law, we are to suppose, was discountenancing disobedience, and giving an eternal manifestation of the glorious character of God, as one who infinitely hateth all iniquity. Now, by the vicarious obedience and sufferings of his own incarnate Son, the end of the law, in each of these views, is answered in the fullest manner.

The obedience of our Saviour answers every purpose, in regard to all who belong to him, which would have been obtained by the sinless obedience of the first federal head of mankind. Christ was given for a covenant of the people. He was constituted a public representative, as much as Adam was ; and might, by his own consent, as justly be so constituted. In this capacity he was "made under the law ;" and, "as it behoved him, fulfilled all righteousness." He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." It was his "meat to do the will of him that sent him, and finish his work." His obedience was tried to the uttermost. He had all the temptations arising from poverty and the most dependent outward circumstances. "The foxes," said he, "have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He had the trial of cruel mockings, and of all the bitterest and most injurious reproaches which the malice of man could invent. "Consider him," says the apostle, "who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself." He encountered the grand adversary that had been too hard for our first parents, and under circumstances the most disadvantageous. He was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, that he might have the trial of his utmost efforts in that solitary situation, without a

friend, without a second to afford him any aid. Here forty days he was without food; and, thus enfeebled and distressed with hunger, he was attacked by the old serpent, the prince of the power of the air, who had permission to try every artifice, — to carry him from pinnacle to mountain, and exhibit all those scenes to his senses, which he judged most likely to seduce him into sin. But this second man was found invincible, and easily vanished all temptations. Our Saviour's subjection was also tried by the last enemy, — an enemy which Adam, in all his probation, had he kept his innocence, never would have seen. He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In his agony, from the extremity of which we must conclude he had something far more dismaying in prospect than any other martyr ever endured, when he "kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me;" he added, "nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."

Now by such obedience, of so divine a person; by his "patient continuance in well doing," amidst all possible provocations and temptations to the contrary, from earth and hell; by his perfect conformity and ready resignation to the holy will of his heavenly Father, through all the arduous work and agonizing conflicts to which he was called; an opportunity was given for the Supreme Governor of the world to encourage virtue, and to glorify himself as the lover and rewarder of righteousness, in the most illustrious manner possible. For here was an instance — a course of obedience and virtue the most tried, the most perfect, the most exalted, that ever was or could be exhibited, in the whole creation of God.

And no less fully answered was the end of the threatening and curse of the law, by our Saviour's sufferings. It was by the Father's appointment, though by his own most free consent, that he was made a curse in the room of guilty men. He was "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." He was "delivered by the determinate counsel," as well as "fore-knowledge of God," when he was "taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain." Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, did against him only what God's hand and his counsels determined before to be done. The hand of the Supreme Judge of all the earth was particularly concerned in this surprising event. It was designed to be considered as an act of divine judgment, notwithstanding the wickedness of the instruments, and the innocence of the sufferer. For thus it was written: "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man, that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd," &c.

Now by laying such amazing sufferings on his dearly beloved Son, — by its pleasing the Lord thus to bruise him, and put him to grief, the

divine vindictive justice was more awfully, as well as more amiably manifested, than ever it could have been by the punishment of sinners themselves, to all eternity. It was more awfully manifested. The apostle, Romans 1 : 17, 18, having spoken of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, assigns the following reason : " For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith : for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." His meaning I conceive is this ; that there is a clearer discovery of the holiness and justice of God, to hate and punish all sin, in Christ crucified, than in any former revelation. And undoubtedly this is true. Not all the curses of the law, amidst the thunders and lightnings of mount Sinai, — nor even the execution of those curses in the unquenchable flames of hell, gave, or can ever give, equal evidence of the righteousness or wrath of God, as the amazing scenes exhibited in Gethsemane, and on mount Calvary. Nothing could ever make the law appear so steadfast, or afford such full ground of faith that every transgression shall receive a just recompense of reward, as the bloody sweat, the deserted exclamation, the expiring agonies, of our Divine Saviour.

This exhibition of vindictive justice, it ought particularly to be observed, was finished and complete. In this way an end was made of sin ; that is, of its adequate and threatened punishment. We may naturally understand this as a principal thing implied in those memorable words of Christ, when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost, " It is finished." Had only the letter of the law taken place, never could the execution of divine justice been complete. The wrath to come would forever have remained. Nor could it ever have appeared by any thing actually done, that God determined to inflict sufferings for sin, in any respect, absolutely infinite. The death of Christ is the only fact which ascertains this, or could ever ascertain it.

And as the awfulness, so the amiableness of vindictive justice, is in this way most gloriously evinced. That this attribute of the Supreme Being is at an infinite remove from malevolence, that he doth not punish from unkindness, or from any delight in tormenting, is what we are often taught, and what it is of great importance we should ever firmly believe. But in no instance is this so unquestionably manifest, as when the sufferings deserved by the iniquities of us all were laid on Christ. Had only rebel creatures, the personal enemies of God, suffered the dreadful effects of his righteous displeasure, it would not have been so clear, that in his fierce wrath there was nothing cruel, nothing akin to the sweetness of human revenge. But when the same sword is commanded to awake against the man that is his fellow, when his only begotten Son is the victim of his holy indignation, against the ungodliness and unrighteous-

ness of man, we must needs be convinced that want of benevolence can have no influence. Christ was certainly dear to the Father, infinitely dear, even when he forsook him, and laid such insupportable sorrows upon him. "He was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;" and he had done nothing to offend him, but was then doing that which infinitely engaged his most endeared affection. Yet when, out of obedience to the Father's will, and tenderest feelings for his injured honor, he had undertaken to be answerable for the offences of fallen man, not one drop of the necessary bitter cup was permitted to pass from him. "Judgment was laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet," in as rigorous and unrelenting a manner as if he had actually been the most odious criminal in all the universe. By this it appears, with the highest possible evidence, not only that there is no respect of persons with God, but also that his inflicting the severest pains and penalties for sin, argues no want of infinite tenderness towards the sufferers. That it is owing only to a just regard to his own glory, and the general good.

Thus is Christ the end, and more than the end, of the law for righteousness. The end of the probationary obedience required of man is more than answered by his obedience; and the end of the curse denounced on fallen man is more than answered by his being made a curse. We may now proceed,

II. To make some inquiry concerning the implied limitation in the text; or to consider why Christ is said to be the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth. We are not to suppose, from this, that there is any want of sufficiency in what our Saviour hath done and suffered, to answer the original purposes of personal obedience and personal punishment in regard to all mankind, did they believe in him. Should all men come to the knowledge of the truth, and cordially embrace the gospel, they might be saved, and every end of the law be fully obtained. But still there are respects in which Christ is actually the end of the law to true believers only; that is, to those who know him, and receive him, and trust in him as their Saviour. Particularly,

First. Christ is, in a peculiar manner, the end of the law for righteousness to believers, as, in their view and apprehension, the divine justice is established by his sufferings, as much as if law had been literally executed. By the everlasting destruction of every transgressor, God would not have appeared more glorious in holiness, than he now does by the sacrifice of his own Son, in the eyes of every one that believeth. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," says the apostle, "hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." The glory of God's justice undoubtedly, as

well as the glory of his grace. But now to unbelievers, this glorious exhibition of the divine character is to no purpose. To them this light, if it shine at all, shineth in darkness, and is not comprehended. To those who never heard the gospel, or hearing, understand it not, or do not believe it, this end of the law is not at all answered by it. Of old the preaching of Christ crucified was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." To none but them that were called, was "Christ the wisdom of God, and the power of God." The case is the same still. The atonement is "a stone of stumbling" to multitudes. They have various notions concerning the nature and design of it, but none which are at all to the purpose of establishing the divine law and government. Many are far from being convinced by the death of Christ, that God is holy, or that he is just. On the contrary, from his so loving the world, they are led to conceive he is not much offended with fallen men ; and that, do what they will, there is no great danger of his wrath. From his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, through a Mediator, they are emboldened to go on in sin with hopes of impunity. None but those who rightly understand and believe the gospel, are persuaded that God will by no means clear the guilty, by the sufferings of their substitute, his well-beloved Son.

Secondly. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, in a peculiar manner, to every one that believeth, as all true believers rely entirely on his righteousness for justification. They see, and are fully satisfied, that, as far as merit is necessary, there is enough in Christ to answer all intentions : that is, a perfect merit of congruity ; which is all that ever was required, or was ever possible. They see it is as congruous, as fit, as honorable and glorious, for God to give eternal life to all who belong to Christ, in reward merely for his righteousness, as it would have been, thus to have rewarded the obedience of Adam ; or even our own personal obedience, had we been perfect. They are also convinced that nothing short of sinless perfection can have any merit, even of congruity, in this great affair. That a character imperfectly good must merit condemnation, and can never entitle a person to justification before the tribunal of him, whose judgment is according to truth. Renouncing, therefore, all their own righteousnesses, as filthy rags, they rely alone on the righteousness of Christ for acceptance with God. Here they depend entirely, in point of merit, not only for initial, but for final justification. Thus did St. Paul himself, though formerly so strict a Pharisee, and afterwards so eminent a Christian. "God forbid," says he, "that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." And again, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, &c., that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own

righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." These are the sentiments of every one that believeth; and they are the hearty sentiments of no one besides. Unbelievers, if they seek salvation at all, seek it as it were by the deeds of the law: they are ever "going about to establish their own righteousness." If they admit a kind of preliminary conditional justification, without any deeds of the law, yet for final acceptance unto eternal life, they rely on personal merit; on works of righteousness done by themselves. Christ is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," in the affair of justifying obedience, to none but true believers.

Thirdly. Christ is the end of the law, in a peculiar manner, to every one that believeth, as he produces in them personal righteousness. To make man holy in heart, and in all manner of conversation, was undoubtedly one ultimate end of the divine law. This Christ will fully effect in regard to all them that believe in him. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus," said the angel to Joseph, "for he shall save his people from their sins." "He gave himself for us," says the apostle, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And again, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, holy and without blemish." But in order to be of that church, or peculiar people, for which he hath undertaken this, we must receive him as our Saviour; and such reception of him is implied in saving faith, according to the definition of the Evangelist. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name." Those who believe to the saving of the soul, accept of Christ as the captain of their salvation, and he engages to conduct them to glory, making them more than conquerors over sin, and all the enemies of their souls. They consent to be his disciples, and he undertakes to make them perfect in every good work. He is of God made unto them sanctification, as well as wisdom, righteousness, and redemption. In him they have the most powerful motives to a "patient continuance in well-doing, and to resist unto blood, striving against sin." "Beholding in a glass the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory. Of his fulness they all receive, and grace for grace." He hath instituted all necessary means for the perfecting of the saints, and by the promised indwelling of his Holy Spirit, those means are made effectual. Eph. 1: 13; "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise." Thus, to every one that believeth, this end of the law, their personal righteousness, or sanctification, is absolutely secured. But this is by no means the case with

respect to unbelievers. In regard to those who have not the faith of God's elect, none of the foregoing things are true. Of them he is despised and rejected, or else altogether unknown. "When they see him, there is no beauty that they should desire him." His doctrine they do not love, his cross they cannot bear, his commandments are always grievous to them. "They break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from them." They are dead in transgression and sin, and walk "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience." Hence,

Fourthly. Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth, as believers, and they only, are delivered from the curse, and entitled to eternal life, through his atonement and righteousness. This I know is disputed. But how it can be disputed, by any who admit the authority of the inspired Scriptures, I am not able to conceive. All those texts which speak of our being justified by faith, plainly imply that believers only are in a state of justification. Nor can any thing less be implied in what St. Paul says was the constant tenor of his preaching, publicly and in private, — "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Undoubtedly he testified what was the way for every man, and the only way for any man, to obtain pardon and eternal life. And unless faith be infallibly connected with salvation, and absolutely necessary in order to it, what can be the meaning of that apostolic answer to the all-important question, "What shall I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Unless unbelief will exclude from all part or lot in the salvation of the gospel, what can be meant by such solemn demands and assertions as the following? "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." The meaning of the two last-mentioned texts plainly is, that those who expect justification by works, must stand or fall by the law of perfection; and that such dependence on any legal observance, as is inconsistent with trusting alone in the merits of Christ, cuts a person off from all interest in him, and from all benefit by the grace of the gospel.

But let us hear the great Teacher come from God, — the author of eternal salvation himself, on this important question. "Verily, verily,"

he says, "I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth in him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned."

It is needless to multiply Scripture proofs of that to which all the Scriptures bear witness. If we mean to build our system on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, or of Jesus Christ himself, the chief corner-stone, we must, I think, make it one of the first and most fixed articles of our creed, that true believers, and they only, shall be saved. On no point is the New Testament more full and explicit than on this.

What remains is by way of inference and application. From the view we have taken of the subject, we may learn,

1. That the gospel constitution, according to which a man is justified by, and not without, faith, is founded in the reason and fitness of things. If any will not be convinced of the fact that this is gospel, by the gospel itself, unless they can see the reason of it, a rational account of this matter may now easily be given. The three first particulars under the last head, are so many obvious and weighty reasons, why he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.

It is reasonable and of importance that all men, by some means or other, should be made to know that God is a holy and righteous being; one who infinitely hates, and will certainly punish, sin. Believers are taught this by the gospel; unbelievers must learn it by the law. To those in whom a proper impression is made of the vindictive justice of God by the death of Christ, there is no necessity that he should show his wrath in their own eternal sufferings. To those who get no reverential idea of God, as a consuming fire, by Christ crucified, it is necessary that he should make himself known by terrible things in righteousness, personally inflicted. If men will not see, they must be made to feel. If the evangelical ministration of righteousness be hid, or will have no effect, the legal ministration of condemnation must have its course. If by God's not sparing his own Son, sinners, instead of seeing his wrath revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, will be only led stupidly to conceive he is altogether such an one as themselves, some

other measures must be used. He must reprove them, and set things in order before their eyes, in another manner. It may be necessary that he should tear them in pieces, and that there should be none to deliver.

It is reasonable and of importance that all who are saved, should be made sensible to whom the glory of their salvation belongs, and not be left vainly to arrogate it to themselves. For this, provision is made by the law of faith. Every one that believeth clearly sees his own utter unworthiness, and that all his salvation is owing to free grace, as the only moving cause, and to the righteousness of Christ, as the alone meritorious ground. On the contrary, as hath been observed, every one that believeth not, builds his hopes of the peculiar favor of God on personal character; on works of righteousness which he hath done, or expects to do; thus robbing Christ, as well as grace, of the praise so infinitely deserved. In a low degree indebted to our great Redeemer, some unbelievers will indeed acknowledge themselves. Thus far only, that, by his death, he hath procured an abatement of rigorous law — a reasonable abatement; so that now, notwithstanding our enfeebled circumstances occasioned by the fall, we may humbly hope for the gracious acceptance of heaven, if we only exert ourselves to the uttermost, and do the best we possibly can. This best they mean to endeavor to do, and doubt not God will be faithful and just to forgive unavoidable imperfections. They think already they have done more than others, and expect distinguishing mercy, since they have made themselves to differ. Now for God to justify those who view matters thus, would be giving up the whole controversy in favor of the carnal mind. It would be to justify sinners, just as they do themselves, on account of their moral depravity. It would be to concede to them that fallen creatures deserve pity, rather than blame, let them conduct how they will; and that really there is little grace, in all the great things done for their salvation. God cannot in justice to himself, or to his Son, be reconciled to sinners, while they are upon these terms; while they only want justice, and to be treated in character, and they are not concerned. Wisdom, righteousness, grace — every divine perfection requires, either that these imaginations of men should be cast down, or else that they should be treated in character, and have ample justice done them. Hence, with highest reason, thus it is written: "Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks which ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow."

It is reasonable and of importance that every rational creature, in some form or other, should be kept under the divine moral government. To discharge mankind from liableness to law, while they are in no subjection to the gospel, would be breaking all bands asunder. It would be letting

sinners loose, without any guide, overseer, or ruler; and without any thing to control or make them afraid. Such anarchy can by no means be tolerated, under the all-perfect divine administration. Against such lawless liberty, therefore, the grace of God which bringeth salvation effectually guards. This great evil, which else would arise from remission of sins, is prevented by the gospel terms; repentance from dead works, and believing with the heart unto righteousness. Every one is under the curse, till he is under law to Christ. Nothing avails, in order to an interest in the atonement, but faith which worketh by love. On this plan, no sinner has reason to consider himself safe from the wrath to come, but in proportion to the evidence he has that he is created unto good works. On this plan the restraints of fear are not at all taken off, but in proportion as love prevails, and casteth out fear,—that love which is the fulfilling of the law. On this plan, the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, because it is certain they are not the disciples of Christ. For in vain do any call him their Saviour, unless they keep his commandments. He will be the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him; but to them who have not obeyed him, he will afford no shelter or protection. His enemies, who would not that he should reign over them, shall be slain before him. That such should be the constitution of the gospel, was necessary, that Christ might not be a minister of sin, but that righteousness and peace might be established, as far as his kingdom should extend. This was necessary that all restraints from iniquity might not be taken off, but that, one way or other, every soul of man should be subject to the moral government of God. And to the fitness and propriety of these terms of the dispensation of grace, unless we will be avowed advocates for the cause of unrighteousness, what can we in reason object? For,

2. We infer from the things which have been said, that the requisition of faith lessens not the glory of free grace, nor of the all-sufficiency of Christ; but quite the reverse. Some, indeed, have supposed a difficulty here. How faith, or any thing else in us, can be requisite, and available, in the affair of justification, without giving man whereof to glory, or without detracting from the fulness of Christ's merit, and the freeness of God's grace, many have been at a loss to comprehend. That some nice distinction is necessary in order fairly to get over this difficulty, the most who have attended at all accurately to the matter, seem to have been sensible. But what the proper distinction is, few have been able to satisfy others, if themselves. To say, as some have done, that faith is not a condition, but only the instrument of justification, it appears to me, rather darkens than clears up the subject. Faith is a conviction of the mind, and an act of the soul; and cannot with any propriety be called an in-

strument. Besides, it is plainly that on which our salvation is suspended, — that without which we cannot be, and having which we certainly shall be saved; which is the proper idea of a condition, call it by what name we will. It is, however, of the last importance that this difficulty should be clearly obviated. Were it impossible for faith which worketh by love to avail any thing, without lessening our dependence on the righteousness of Christ, and obscuring the lustre of free grace, this would seem indeed a weighty objection against its being supposed necessary. But we need not invent another gospel, according to which a man is justified without faith, and may get to heaven without holiness, that boasting may be excluded, and that grace may abound. The only thing needful is to show, that nothing in us is required or available, as in any sense meritorious. We may distinguish between a condition, and a meritorious condition; a congruity, and a merit of congruity. This distinction applies in a multitude of common instances. Something is often required to be known or done by a person, in order to his inheriting an interest, or being the proper subject of certain immunities and privileges, when it is not at all required under a notion of its rendering the person deserving, and is of no kind of avail in that view. That thus it is in the case before us, and how it is thus, may easily be perceived from the things now said upon this subject.

We have not only seen, under the first head, that what our Saviour hath done needs no addition, in point of atonement, or of merit: but, under the second, we have seen that Christ is the end of the law for actual justification, to believers rather than unbelievers, not because of any worthiness in the former, more than in the latter; but for other reasons altogether. What merit is there in being made to see the justice of God, as displayed in the sufferings of his own incarnate Son, the sinner's substitute? Yet this is necessary that the divine character may be vindicated, in the eyes of every one who is saved. In the next thing implied in saving faith — being convinced of our infinite unworthiness, and of the all-sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, and the sovereign freeness of God's grace — certainly we can have no merit here, nor has this any tendency to self-exaltation. The very reason why a right understanding and belief of these things are required, is, that pride might be hid from man, and that he who is justified might glory only in the Lord. And what mighty merit is there in consenting to have such an one as Christ for our Saviour, when, in the day of his power, we are made willing? Can this be so great a thing, in such creatures as we are, as to deserve the remission of all our former infinite offences, and to render it no more than suitable that we would be immediately received as the sons of God, and heirs of immortal glory? No such thing surely can be supposed.

The congruity here cannot, by any means, be a merit of congruity. There is not even a comparative merit in the believer, in many cases. Other things being equal, it is true he is a little more excellent than the unbeliever; but very often the man who believes to the saving of his soul, in point of desert, all things considered, is ten times more a child of hell, than thousands who perish in their sins. Notwithstanding he is so good, through divine grace, as to consent to be saved, yet, upon the whole, he is a much greater sinner than multitudes who do not thus consent; which shows that worthiness is not the thing needed, nor regarded. The congruity that every one who cordially embraces the gospel should be saved, does not consist in personal excellency, but is quite from another quarter. By this act he puts himself under the care of Christ, who thereupon becomes surety for his recovery from all iniquity, and that he shall be zealous of good works: hence he may safely be released from unpardoning law, and be interested in a better covenant, established upon better promises, in the hand of a mediator. Christ is guaranty for as many as receive him; therefore to all such the happy privilege is given, to become the sons of God. In every view of the matter, boasting is excluded by the law of faith; in every view, therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace. By a right understanding, a firm belief, and a cordial compliance with the gospel, the sinner is sunk down, in his own eyes, to his proper place; while to the Father of mercies, and the all-sufficient Saviour of them who were utterly lost, is given the glory so infinitely deserved. Christ and grace are more exalted, and man is more abased, than if remission of sins and eternal life were given to sinners, remaining in ignorance and unbelief.

3. The things which have been said may help us to see, that there is really an universal door of mercy opened to sinners, and a glorious hope set before all without exception, for which they have infinite reason to glorify God and to be thankful; the limitation in the text notwithstanding. Had no sufficient provision been made for the salvation of but only a remnant of mankind; or, were the terms of obtaining an interest in the covenant of grace naturally impossible to men, without that special divine influence which is given only to an elect number, it would indeed seem, as some have objected, that the offers of mercy could not, with any sincerity, be made to the non-elect; and that it could not be their fault that they are not saved. But neither of these is truly the case. Christ hath tasted death for every man, so that no man need taste the second death, because of any want of sufficiency in his atonement. He is the propitiation for the sins of every one that believeth; and not for theirs only, "but also for the sins of the whole world." He hath rendered all that obedience, and endured all that suffering which the law made necessary,

in order to the eternal redemption of every individual of the human race. By his righteousness the free gift may come upon all men unto justification, unless it be because they will not, or do not, "come unto him that they might have life." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; the chief of sinners." And what doth the Lord our God require of us, in order to an interest in Christ and in his salvation? Nothing naturally impossible, surely. Nothing which would be hard, were it not for an evil heart. It is but to understand what is most plainly revealed, to love that which is obviously most excellent, and to do that which is evidently most reasonable. As to knowing what we are to believe, so far as is necessary in order to eternal life, were men willing to come to the knowledge of the truth, there would be no difficulty. A very little serious attention to the Bible would be sufficient. There is no necessity of ascending high, or diving deep, to find the infallible truth; the word is in all your hands, in which it is fully made known. Nor would it be any harder to perceive the things of the spirit of God, as they are spiritually discerned, than to understand them in speculation, were it not for the blindness of men's hearts; their selfishness, pride, and other corrupt passions. To see the hatefulness of sin, the desirableness of salvation, and the universal loveliness of the Lord Jesus Christ, would be the easiest things in the world, were it not for a totally vicious taste, whence wicked men "call evil good, and good evil; put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." And as to doing what is required, being willing to be followers of Christ, denying ourselves and taking up the cross; nothing in this is impracticable, or arduous, provided we have any real inclination to be good. "His yoke is easy, his burden is light, his commandments are not grievous." What God said to Cain, he may most justly say to every murmurer against the terms of the gospel, as hard and impossible: "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou dost not well, sin lieth at the door." If doing at all well be our duty, or if doing not well in any case be our sin, it must lie at our own door if we perish, or fail of eternal life. No unbeliever can dispute this, unless he will assert, that despising and rejecting Christ, making light of the gospel, and neglecting so great salvation, is doing well. A door of salvation is set open to all men. Whosoever will, is heartily bid welcome to take of the water of life freely. Yet,

4. From the limitation in the text, as explained in the foregoing discourse, have we not great reason to apprehend that many receive the grace of God in vain, and that, through their own fault, Christ will become of none effect to multitudes? Such apprehensions, however uncharitable, are abundantly suggested in the holy Scriptures. When our Sav-

your was asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" he did not assert the contrary, but answered and said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." In another place he says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." And according to the account of the gate and the way of salvation now given, men must be exceedingly pressed, and very powerfully persuaded, before they will be disposed to enter in at that gate, and to walk in that way. How many are perfectly careless concerning the world to come, and scarce ever ask the question, what they shall do to be saved! When the gospel is preached to them, they make light of it, and pay little attention to it. Their farms, their merchandise, their luxuries, diversions, and pleasures, engross their whole time; their Bibles they rarely read, and God is not in all their thoughts. How many have not faith, and take no pains to know what they are to believe! How many are left to strong delusions to believe lies, and stop their ears like the deaf adder, against all arguments to convince them of the errors they have imbibed! How many "say to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits!" How many are "far from righteousness!" far from being "zealous of good works!" How many are "disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another!" If "the curse which goeth forth over the face of the whole earth," even under the gospel, be such that "every one that is unrighteous shall be cut off on this side according to it," and every one who is "self-righteous shall be cut off on that side according to it," how few will be left! Have we not reason to fear that the blessed, who shall inherit the kingdom of God, are, comparatively, but a little flock?

Were saving faith only a belief, that, through the atonement, good men shall be saved on account of their own goodness; and did this faith save men, only as it is a principle of moral virtue, or a motive to good works; personal morality being the alone real ground of distinction between one man and another, in regard to eternal life, as some have supposed; we might, indeed, extend our charity very far. We might think, with men of liberal sentiments, that, whatever men's faith may be, or whether they have any faith at all, they will be saved, provided only their lives be good. For if the only end of believing the gospel were to make men moral, provided this end be obtained, no matter about the means. Yea, in that case, we might say to the Christian, Because thou hast believed the future things revealed, thou hast been careful to main-

tain good works; blessed are they that have not believed, and yet have maintained good works. Their virtue and reward must be greater, in proportion as their motives have been less.

On the other hand, were the faith by which a man is justified only a belief that he is in a state of justification; and this without any ground, from Scripture, or sense, or reason, more than what every man has, all which others have taught, we might well extend our charity further still. We must conclude, on those principles, that all men are actually in a state of justification; or else run into the palpable absurdity of supposing that a thing before not true, is made a truth by being believed.

But very different must be our apprehensions concerning the safe and happy condition of mankind, according to the things which have now been advanced. The true evangelical faith implies a right understanding and firm belief of the glorious revelation of God's righteous wrath against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, by the substituted voluntary sufferings of his own incarnate Son; it implies an entire dependence on mere mercy, through the alone merit of Jesus Christ, for acceptance unto eternal life; viewing ourselves as infinitely unworthy, and the chief of sinners; — it also implies a cordial willingness to be saved from our sins, and to be subject in all things to our divine Redeemer; and its never-failing consequences are, remaining and increasing righteousness and true holiness, in heart and in all manner of conversation. Every one that hath this faith shall be saved; and every one that hath it not, shall be damned. If, by searching the Scriptures, we be fully convinced that these things are so, our charity must necessarily be very narrow and contracted. Though we would fain hope all things, and believe all things, as far as the utmost bounds of rational probability; yet we cannot but fear it is still the sad case, that many are in the way which leadeth to destruction; and that a few find the gate, and are going in the way which leadeth unto everlasting life.

5. Hence you easily see we cannot approve the very extensive charity of those who believe that all mankind are in a state of grace, and will certainly be saved, however much they may break the law of God, and make light of the gospel of Christ. Not but that a very small degree of universal benevolence would undoubtedly lead any one most devoutly to wish that the bitter cup of never-ending misery might pass from every soul of man, if it were possible, — if it might be, consistently with the highest glory of God, and the greatest universal good. Not but that we ought undoubtedly to pray for the worst of men, and our bitterest enemies, that they may be saved; and to do all in our power to promote their salvation. Universal charity is good, if it be used charitably. But we must think the Universalists exercise and express their charity

to destruction, and not to edification. We cannot think that the likeliest way to save those who are going on in their sins, is to tell them they are in no danger. Nor can we possibly believe, unless we had quite another gospel, that the careless neglecters of the great salvation; the abusers of the goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering of God; the despisers and rejecters of a dying Saviour; and liars, and thieves, and murderers, are all in the sure way to immortal happiness. How any who believe the Bible, can believe this, we cannot comprehend. Yet such, we hear, are the glad tidings of great joy of late proclaimed by some, in the pulpits of him who is the end of the law for righteousness; who, they suppose, hath so effectually put an end to all divine law, that every lover of iniquity may give full scope to all his appetites and lusts, with certain impunity, and even without sin! So they preach, and so some of you, my hearers, I understand, believe.

If this be "glory to God in the highest;" if it be most conducive to "peace on earth," and expressive of the greatest "good-will towards men," so would we gladly believe and preach likewise. But to convince us of this, we want much more substantial reasons than any we have yet heard. We are not satisfied that unbelievers are as safe as believers, excepting only their present anxiety, merely by the fine story of a weak old woman, thrown into a mighty panic at hearing cannon on an occasion of public rejoicing.* That a sinner may be saved without the faith of the Universalists, as well as with, were that faith true, is too self-evident to require any great parade of candor in them to own, or of address in order to its illustration. But that men who "know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," are really as safe as the soundest believers, and most virtuous Christians, not all the wit of man, nor all the subtlety of the old serpent, will be able to give full satisfaction to every one.

I have read several of the most celebrated pieces on the side of universal salvation; but have seen nothing in any of them that looks like more than the shadow of an argument in its support. Nothing that in any measure shakes the foundation upon which the contrary doctrine rests. "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes." Theirs doubtless is so to some of them. They have naturally enough been led into it, it must be granted, by the errors of many others, who have not carried their inquiries so far, nor been so self-consistent. I am ready also to suppose, that the tender feelings of humanity may have had considerable influence with some, to induce them to believe this seemingly most benevolent doc-

* A story told by the famous Mr. Murray, in a sermon preached just before in the same place, of an aged lady who was frightened out of her wits by the firing in consequence of the capture of Lord Cornwallis; insisting that the enemy were coming, and refusing to be pacified.

trine. However, if any rational man, who has been leaning that way, will candidly advert to the reasons and proofs in support of the opposite opinion, even only as now partially stated, I cannot but think he will be somewhat staggered. I imagine he must be convinced thus far, at least, that risking men's souls on the presumption that all will be saved, is going upon a very forlorn hope.

Let me entreat such an one not to endanger himself or others by presuming thus, and teaching men so; be sure without weighing the matter well, and being very certain that he is not in an error. It is better not to have the honor of leading a party, and being of the foremost in singular discoveries, than to "go down to the grave with a lie in one's right hand;" or to lead others upon ground which will not support them, and be the occasion of their falling into the pit, out of which there may be no redemption. It is better that men should not laugh now, than that they should mourn and weep forever and ever. If the doctrine of universal salvation be true, all the good that is done by its propagation, is only preventing a little present disquietude to sinners, who are generally pretty secure and easy already. If it be not true, the mischief done by thus encouraging them in carelessness and transgression, may be no less than being the means of their everlasting ruin. Not to mention the flood-gate to confusion and every evil work; to the destruction of all the temporal happiness of society, which, whether true or false, is opened by this doctrine.

But if the blind will lead the blind, we must let them alone. Let me however entreat those who have eyes to open them, before they fall into the ditch. Search the Scriptures, my beloved hearers, whether these things be so. Search the Scriptures which testify of Christ, and in which he hath borne witness to the truth. If any man teach another gospel than that which he hath taught, believe him not. He may be a very moral man; but his doctrine is not according to godliness, nor favorable to honesty. It subverts all moral obligation. He may be a man of fine sense; but great men are not always wise. Great men have often been great opposers of the saving truth. Great men, from the days of old, have sometimes said, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." Yea, the greatest of all fallen intelligences, has from the beginning said, "Disbelieve and transgress with safety. Ye shall not surely die." Believe not this, though it be not new divinity, but a most ancient doctrine, and a doctrine of the great. Think not that neither the unbelieving, nor the abominable, nor murderers, nor whoremongers, nor sorcerers, nor idolaters, nor any liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. "Let no man deceive you with vain words." If the Bible be true, "because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

A DISCOURSE,

DESIGNED TO EXPLAIN THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

DELIVERED IN

THE CHAPEL OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE, ON THE 11th AND 25th OF
NOVEMBER, 1796.

BY

JONATHAN MAXCY, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE.

A DISCOURSE,

DESIGNED TO EXPLAIN THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

FOR IT BECAME HIM FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS,
IN BRINGING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, TO MAKE THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVA-
TION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.—Hebrews 2: 10.

THE sufferings of Christ were essential to his character as a Saviour. Without them the pardon of sin would have subverted the authority of the divine law, and have prostrated the dignity of the divine government. For, if God should not execute the penalty incurred by the transgressor, if he should not manifest in his moral government the same abhorrence of sin that he does in the declarations of his law, his word and his conduct would be repugnant to each other, and he would afford no convincing evidence, that his law was a transcript of his will; that it ought to be considered as sacred, and respected as an universal, invariable standard of obedience for all rational creatures. One great and chief design of the atonement made by the sufferings of Christ, was to impress a thorough conviction of God's displeasure against sin, though he should pardon the sinner. It was essential to a consistent exercise of pardon, that in some visible expression, God's real disposition towards sin should be manifested as clearly, fully, and unequivocally, as it would be in the execution of the penalty of the law on the transgressor. This disposition, when brought into view in some sensible manifestation, vindicates God's character from all suspicion, and fully discovers his attachment to the dignity of his government, to the rights of his justice, and the truth of his law. The sufferings of Christ appear to have been available to the procurement of salvation, so far as they portrayed God's displeasure against sin, and evinced the infinite value he set upon his own character and law. Hence it is that the Scriptures so frequently bring into view a suffering, crucified Christ, as the only hope of salvation. His sufferings support the dignity

of God, as the moral governor, while he extends mercy to the guilty ; they present him in a glorious point of light, as the universal sovereign and proprietor, as the great source from which all things have proceeded, and in which all shall finally terminate. It is therefore with great reason and propriety that the text declares, that "it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

These words, by bringing into view the passion of Christ, as essential to a display of the divine character in the pardon of sin, present the doctrine of atonement in a light truly interesting and important. For surely nothing can be calculated more effectually to awaken the solicitude, and raise the desponding hopes of the guilty, than a prospect of forgiveness. Why God should require sufferings and the effusion of blood as a prerequisite to the remission of sin, has been a subject of much inquiry, and to many "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." They have supposed, that if God would not pass by sin without an atonement, without full satisfaction to his justice, he must be naturally implacable ; that he has no mercy, because he punishes the innocent for the guilty, and bestows no good without an adequate compensation. Sufferings, it is true, can add nothing to the love of God to his creatures ; but they may be, and it is hoped can be, proved to be necessary to a consistent exercise and display of that love. Atonement does not imply a purchase of God's mercy ; it does not imply satisfaction to justice, as a cancellation of debt ; nor does it infer any obligation on justice for the liberation of sinners ; for if it do, then sinners are not saved by forgiveness, since it is impossible for mercy to pardon, where justice cannot punish. Atonement implies the necessity of sufferings, merely as a medium through which God's real disposition towards sin should be seen in such a way, that an exercise of pardon should not interfere with the dignity of government, and the authority of law.

The sufferings of Christ for sin characterize the gospel scheme, and distinguish it from all others. The atonement made by them, adds to the Christian religion its chief superiority, and lays the only foundation of hope for all who have just views of the divine law, and the moral state of man. All the doctrines of the gospel will derive their peculiar complexion from the manner in which the doctrine of atonement is explained. A mistake here will be peculiarly injurious, and will infallibly lead into error in every part of divinity. Atonement is the great sun in the centre of the system. Blot it out, and you are lost forever. Not a ray from any other quarter will dart through the gloomy prison of sin, to cheer its disconsolate inhabitants, to disenthral them from their chains, and enlighten their path to freedom and glory.

The design of revelation is to unfold the true God to men, acting according to the principles of his nature. This God is just and merciful. He is disposed to punish and to pardon. How then shall his justice and his mercy be displayed towards the transgressor, without infringing or destroying each other? God threatens punishment to sin. Sin is committed. God, instead of punishing, pardons. Where is his justice? Where is his truth? Where is the regard due to his law, his character and government? If he punish, where is his mercy? These difficulties will be obviated by a right understanding of the atonement which Christ made for sin. To exhaust this important subject, to comprehend all its connections and consequences, perhaps at present exceeds all human capacity. Enough of it, however, can be known and understood to enable us to perceive its excellency, and to secure our present and future felicity. As the design of atonement was to save men from the curse of the law, in consistency with the perfections and designs of God, the atonement had immediate respect to the law of God, to the moral state of men, and to the ultimate and chief end of God in creation. Without a just and proper view of these three points, all inquiries respecting atonement will be extremely defective, if not totally erroneous. They will leave us, like an unpiloted ship, driven by the winds over the pathless ocean.

In the subsequent discourse, therefore, I shall

First, explain the nature of the divine law, the moral state of man, and the design of God in creation.

Secondly, the matter, the necessity, and the nature of atonement.

A few inferences will then close the subject.

I shall begin the first division of this discourse, by

I. Explaining the nature of the divine law.

Under this denomination we are not to include all the laws given to the people of Israel. For though these may be termed divine with respect to their author, yet they are not all of a moral nature, and consequently not obligatory on all mankind. For this reason all the positive laws appertaining to the former dispensation, are not included in the phrases, "divine law," and "the law of God." These are used by way of eminence, to denote the moral law, as it is promulged and epitomized in the decalogue.

* The laws given unto the Israelites were of three kinds, moral, ceremonial and forensic. The first respected them as rational, accountable

* *Leges autem iis latæ non unius generis fuerunt. Tres omnino theologis recensentur. Moralis sive decalogica, ceremonialis, et politica, sive forensis. Scilicet tripliciter considerari Israeliticus populus potuit. 1. Ut creature rationales, a Deo, uti suprema ratione tam moraliter, quam naturaliter dependentes. Et sic data fuit ipsi lex decalogica, quæ quoad substantiam, cum lege naturæ, homines qua tales obligante,*

creatures ; the second, as members of the ecclesiastical body ; the third, as members of the political body. The two last kinds of laws were peculiar to the Israelites. They alone had the promise of the Messiah. His death and sufferings for sin were prefigured by the various offerings and sacrifices enjoined in their ritual. Hence they received the ceremonial law, as an indication of the Messiah yet to come, who being the substance of all its shadows, was, by the sacrifice of himself, to abrogate its authority, and discontinue its observance. Hence Christ, in the sufferings by which he made atonement for sin, had no other respect to the ceremonial law, than as he corresponded to its typical prefigurations.

The forensic laws of the Israelites were accommodated to their peculiar genius as a people ; to their peculiar circumstances in the land of Canaan ; and were designed to form the whole nation into a republican theocracy. Hence it appears, that the ceremonial and forensic or political laws of the Israelites, were of a temporary nature, and obligatory no longer than continued by the express injunction of the legislator. In this view, as they did not originate in the eternal fitness and propriety of things, they may be styled positive, in contradistinction to those which are moral ; which express the unchangeable will of God, respecting the obligation, the obedience and disobedience, the reward and punishment, of rational creatures. These laws primarily flow from the absolute perfection of God, and, like his nature, are sacred, immutable, and eternal. These laws, summed up in one body, are styled the law, or law of God. To this law the whole of Christ's work, in making atonement for sin, had immediate respect. Without a just view of this law, therefore, the doctrine of atonement cannot be understood, nor its necessity and propriety perceived. Concerning the divine law, two things must be particularly noticed.

1. It contains a prescription of certain duties. These are contained in the decalogue, as it was delivered at Mount Sinai, and are all summarily comprehended in love, as the fountain from which all real, acceptable obedience flows. Thus Christ explained the law : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment ; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. 22 : 37, &c.

una eademque est. 2. Ut ecclesia veteris testamenti ; expectans Messiam promissum, et lætiora per ejus consummationem, tempora. Atque eo respectu acceperunt legem ceremonialem, quæ ostendit quidem, nondum venisse Messiam, et satisfactione sua, omnia consummasse, fore tamen, ut veniat et omnia faciat, nova. 3. Ut populus peculiaris, rempublicam, genio ac indoli suæ convenientem, habens in terra Canaan.
— *Witsii de Oecon. Fœd.*, lib. iv. cap. iv. p. 609.

Paul viewed the law in the same light, when he said, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13: 10. No action, therefore, either mental or external, which does not proceed from pure love to God, can come under the denomination of true virtue or obedience. This law is a delineation of perfect rectitude, and was designed to govern the whole man, by inspiring right motives, and producing an entire correspondence between them and external actions.

2. The second thing to be noticed concerning the law is, that it contains comminations of divine vengeance against transgression. Without these, it would not properly in its nature have the force and authority of a law. The language of the law, expressing the penal sanction is, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of the law, to do them." Deut. 27: 26. This curse most undoubtedly is the just and proper punishment of sin. For it is inconsistent with the perfection of God to threaten a punishment greater or less than sin deserves. This is the punishment from which Christ delivers. Thus Paul says to the Galatians, "God sent forth his Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Gal. 4: 4, 5. That is, to redeem them from its curse, as he explains it in another place. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. 3: 13. Let it here be particularly noticed, that this commination annexed to the divine law, is the sum and foundation of all the others expressed in Scripture, and denounced against transgressors. Various threatenings are found in the New Testament, denounced against those who reject the gospel. These threatenings express the real penalty of the divine law. For no man can slight, neglect, or refuse the gospel, without violating the law, and incurring its penalty. That this penalty, which will be executed on the impenitent in a future state, is endless misery or destruction, appears from the following passages of Scripture. In Dan. 12: 2, it is said, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Matt. 18: 8; "It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." Matt. 25: 41, Christ says to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." And in verse 46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Mark 3: 29, Christ says of him who blasphemeth the Holy Ghost, that he is "in danger of eternal damnation." Paul says of those who disobey the gospel, "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." The punishment spoken of in these words undoubtedly is the penalty of the law. For the law only can condemn and punish. Here perhaps it will be objected, that the punishment implied in these words is not strictly endless, since the word everlasting is sometimes appropriated

to express things of a limited duration; that it is not the nature of punishment to be endless, and therefore the term everlasting, when used to express its duration, does not prove it to be strictly endless. To this it is replied, that because the term everlasting is in some instances used to denote a limited duration, it does not follow that it is used so in all; not even when used to express the duration of things which would cease to exist if left to the laws of nature; for God can perpetuate whatever he pleases. For all our knowledge of the nature and duration of future punishment, we are wholly indebted to revelation. In this revelation God has explained the duration of punishment, and consequently the true penalty of his law, not only by the word everlasting, but by unequivocal determinate phrases, denoting it to be strictly endless. This is fully evident from the following passages, which positively determine the meaning of the word everlasting, when used to express the duration of future punishment. In Mark 9: 43, Christ says, "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." In Matt. 12: 31, it is said, "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." In John 3: 36, it is said, "He that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Of the same import are all those passages which speak of those who are said to perish, to be rejected, to be cast away, to be lost and destroyed. To these testimonies of Scripture, ascertaining the penalty of the divine law to be endless misery or destruction, let us add the testimony of reason.

The law, whose essence is love, tends in its nature to secure the highest happiness of all rational creatures. For if all comply with its requirements, if all love God with all the heart, and their neighbor as themselves, what room is there left for sin or misery? These originate not in any deficiency in the divine government, but in deviation from the divine law. In this God has discovered as much goodness as he has in the gospel. For the first tends to secure the highest happiness without sin, and the last to secure it after the introduction of sin. Whatever, therefore, is opposed to God's law, is opposed to his gospel; and whatever is opposed to either, tends to introduce universal, endless evil. If, therefore, endless punishment be not the penalty of the divine law, it does not appear that it has any penalty. For whatever penalty God annexes to his law, must be just; that is, it must be as great as the evil introduced by transgression, or as great as the glory of God, and the good of the rational universe, require. The greatness of this penalty must be estimated from the consequences that would ensue from an unrestrained indulgence of transgression, and the magnitude of the object against which the transgression

is committed. The law of God tends to universal good. As sin opposes that law, it tends to universal evil. Did all rational creatures commit sin without any restraint from divine interposition, all would be involved in endless ruin and despair. The law of God, which is as near to him as his own nature, would be universally violated and contemned. For all these consequences, so dishonourary to God, so ruinous to creatures, each one concerned in transgression must feel himself accountable. Sin is atheism. It denies God. It strikes at his government and character, and consequently at all good and all happiness. As sin, therefore, tends to introduce endless evil, if punishments are to be proportioned to crimes, sin deserves endless punishment. Having explained the nature of the divine law in considering its precepts and penalty, I now proceed to explain,

Secondly. The moral state of man. By the moral state of man, we are to understand the state in which he is, considered as an accountable creature, capable of praise and blame, of reward and punishment. This state, as it respects all men in unregeneracy, appears from the Scriptures to be characterized by the following things:—

1. It is a state of entire alienation of affection from God. That is, it is a state in which the moral temper is averse to divine and spiritual things, insensible of their excellency, and regardless of their importance. This truth is expressed in Scripture by “being dead in trespasses and sins,” “being alienated from the life of God, desiring not the knowledge of his ways,” “receiving not the things of the Spirit.” The moral state of man, in this view, does not imply that he does not possess noble and exalted capacities of mind. These are not of a moral nature, and consequently not susceptible of depravity. Man, though destitute of all real holiness in the sight of God, though wholly sinful in all the exercises of his heart, still possesses natural affection, gratitude, sympathy, and sensibility; desire of pleasure, and aversion to pain; these are merely the affections and propensities of his constitution, and belong to other animals which are not moral agents. Man’s depravity does not imply that he is destitute of all the natural ability on which the propriety of the divine commands and injunctions rests. If he be not a moral agent, if he have not ability to obey, it does not appear that he can be capable of disobedience. Deity will never censure a blind man for not seeing, nor an idiot for not being wise. He requires the exercise of nothing further than the capacity he bestows. All the depravity of man consists in the wrong use of his natural powers, and in his unwillingness to use them as God requires. The preceding description of the state of man by nature, is fully confirmed by the following passages of Scripture:—Gen. 6: 5; “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and

that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Gen. 8: 21; "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Eccl. 9: 3; "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil." Jer. 17: 9; "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Rom. 3: 10, &c.; "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they are all gone out of the way; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Paul testifies concerning himself, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." He declares, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God;" that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The conduct of men, in all ages and nations, fully exemplifies and confirms these assertions.

2. Another thing which characterizes the state of man is, that it is a state of guilt and condemnation. This necessarily follows, from the consideration that man is, in the disposition of his heart, opposed to God and his law. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." By this knowledge come guilt and condemnation. All men are under obligation to obey God's law. The law, therefore, lays its injunctions upon them, demands obedience, and denounces punishment to the transgressor. "Now we know," says Paul, "that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may become guilty before God." Rom. 3: 19.

3. Another thing which characterizes the state of man is, a state of total impotency, as to the attainment of salvation. The truth of this appears from two considerations.

1st. The law requires sinless obedience. It promises life to the performance of all its requirements, and to nothing else. Its language is, "The man that doth them shall live in them." But man has disqualified himself in a moral view to do these things, since he is "under sin," and continues to commit it while in an unrenewed state. As man, therefore, while a sinner, cannot render sinless perfect obedience, he cannot effect his own salvation.

2d. Besides, man has incurred the penalty of the divine law. It stands against him, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law, to do them." This penalty has been demonstrated to be endless suffering. How shall man free himself from it? He can do nothing which can render it consistent with God to pardon. He cannot keep the law by perfect obedience, and consequently cannot be saved on that ground. If he undertake to endure its penalty, he of consequence must give up all hope of salvation.

Having explained the moral state of man, I now proceed,

3. To explain the design of God in creation.

It is a mark of a wise and intelligent being to have respect, in all his actions, to the accomplishment of some end. This circumstance principally distinguishes the actions of men from those of brutes. In all operations performed by rational beings, we expect design, and an exact adjustment of every part to the accomplishment of that design. When we look at the majestic works of God in creation and redemption, we are at once impressed with the absurdity of even imagining them to have been made without a view to some great end. In these works we behold order, connection, regularity, and harmony. How these should have existed without design, is impossible to conceive. It is equally impossible to conceive how God should make such stupendous works, without a view to some end exceedingly great, glorious, and important. For it is inconsistent with wisdom to make great preparations, and to perform great actions, for the accomplishment of small purposes. If God have one chief end in his works, we may be assured that these works are harmoniously adjusted to its accomplishment. All God's works, then, must be considered as means wisely arranged, and tending to one final issue. This issue must be brought into view before the means of its completion can be seen in their propriety and beauty. Let us, then, propose to ourselves this question: Why did God create? Surely he was under no necessity to do this. For if he was, that necessity must have been eternal, and the same reason must have been assigned for the existence of things, as for the existence of God. That reason God gave, when he said, "I am that I am." God, as he is eternal, involves in his own nature the cause of his existence; but this cannot be the case with any thing created. Creation, then, as it did not proceed from necessity, must have proceeded from choice. The question then stands thus: "Was God's end in creation himself, or the thing created?" The following considerations, perhaps, will assist us in answering this question.

1. Before creation nothing exterior to God existed. The reason, then, why any thing has existed, must be sought for in God. That reason must have been his own choice, and if so, then his own pleasure, and not the thing to be created. Should it here be objected, that God made creatures on purpose to bestow happiness upon them, the objection proves this only, that God is pleased with bestowing happiness. If so, then God made creatures for his own pleasure, and not for theirs. If God made creatures merely for the sake of making them happy, why does he permit so many of them to be miserable? We learn what God means by what he does, as well as by what he says. God has created all

things, and in these has exhibited a picture of himself. But it would be absurd to suppose all this was done without design.

2. The next consideration I bring into view is, that it is inconsistent for infinite wisdom and goodness to prefer an inferior to a superior object. Such conduct would carry the most striking marks, and wear the most prominent features, of injustice and imperfection. All creatures are as nothing, in comparison of the immense God. Collect all the powers and principalities of heaven, all the perfection of angels and virtues of men, all the splendors scattered over creation; collect all these into one vast assemblage, and they are lost before God, like a mote in the full blaze of the sun. Creation has added nothing to the real sum of virtue and happiness; for these, wherever found, are only streams from the great exhaustless fountain. God, therefore, created with a view to diffuse and communicate, in different forms, that immense fulness which dwelt in himself. God must love and regard the highest excellency most; but this is nowhere but in himself. Nor is this supreme regard of God to himself, as some have affirmed, an exercise of selfishness, but of the highest benevolence; for this consists in a supreme regard to the greatest good. But this greatest good is God himself.

3. In the next place we may consider further, that for God to act with a supreme regard to himself, or to the display of his true character, is to act in such a way as will secure the highest happiness of intelligent beings. For all true happiness results from the knowledge and enjoyment of the greatest good. God is the greatest and the only true good in the universe. It follows from this that the more this true good is displayed, the more it will be known and enjoyed. Consequently, more happiness is secured by a display of God, than could be by any thing else. God, then, must surely, in all his works, act with a supreme regard to his own glory, or to himself. This is the uniform language of Scripture. God declares, "that he made all things for himself;" that "of him, and to him, and through him, are all things."

From these considerations it appears, that God's ultimate and chief end in creation, was himself.

Having explained the several things proposed in the first part of this discourse, concerning the law of God, the moral state of man, and the ultimate and chief end of God in creation; I now proceed to explain the matter, necessity, and the nature of atonement.

Since it appears that the ultimate and chief end of God in creation was the display of his own nature, we may infer, with certainty, that this end will be kept in view in the continuance and government of creation.

For if it be not, then the arrangements in the divine administration are not calculated so as certainly to coincide with the ultimate intention of the divine will. But God "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Therefore all parts of the great scheme of creation, providence, and redemption, will ultimately exhibit a complete picture of the true character of God. He will then appear in reality to be "the beginning and the end," "the all in all." The obedience and sufferings of Christ, as they are the medium through which God's love of holiness and hatred of iniquity are seen, so they answer, as to the display of God's glory, all the purposes and more than would have been answered by the endless obedience or sufferings of all transgressors. Atonement, therefore, by the death of Christ, is to be viewed as a necessary part of God's great plan, and as possessing the propriety and fitness of means for the accomplishment of an end. If we consider atonement, in a general view, as that part of Christ's mediatorial work which rendered the forgiveness of sin consistent with God's character, it will comprise, as essential to its nature, more than suffering, though suffering appears to constitute its chief and most important part. If grace were to be manifested, it was proper and necessary that that grace should "reign through righteousness;" that is, in such a way as was consistent with the rectitude or justice of God. Whatever, therefore, would bring into view the character and law of God as effectually as the perfect obedience or suffering of men, must be considered as the atonement for sin. Though the punishment of the transgressor would have displayed God's truth and his hatred of sin, yet it would not have displayed his love of mercy, and disposition to pardon. But all these are displayed in the salvation of the transgressor, by the obedience and death of Christ.

Having premised these things, I proceed to explain,

First. The matter of atonement, or that in which it consisted.

1. The divine law requires perfect obedience. God, in giving that law, virtually declared that it was good, and ought to be obeyed. The sinner, by transgressing it, virtually declared that it was not good, and ought not to be obeyed. Should God, in this case, pardon without manifesting his regard to the law, so as to establish its authority as a rule of obedience, and to display his aversion to sin, his conduct would coincide with that of the sinner, and tend to the destruction of his own government. But if God, by a vicarious or substituted obedience and suffering, give, in his moral government, a full confirmation and conviction of the goodness of his law, and the justice of its requirements, his conduct, though he pardon, stands as directly opposed to the conduct of the sinner, as if he should condemn the sinner to endure the full penalty of the law. The obedience of Christ, on account of the superior dignity of his

character, honored the law, declared and confirmed it to be good, more effectually than the obedience of all finite creatures could have done to eternity. In Christ "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead." As he had all wisdom and goodness, his voluntary obedience must produce a conviction that the law was good; for he could not err in his judgment concerning it, and, consequently, if it had been a bad law, he would not have submitted to its precepts. The obedience of Christ, therefore, as it virtually condemned sin, and expressed his approbation of the law, so as to establish its authority as a rule of righteousness, appears to constitute an essential, though not the principal, part of atonement. Christ, as a surety, engaged to fulfil all the righteousness of the law. To do this, it was as necessary that he should obey, as it was that he should suffer. The language of Scripture is, "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2: 8. The obedience and sufferings of Christ, in making atonement, were inseparably connected. "Though he were a son," says Paul, "yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Heb. 5: 8. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. 8: 3. But did not Christ's obedience bear testimony against sin, and in favor of the law, as really as his sufferings? Were not both essential to a display of justice and mercy? So far as the obedience of Christ rendered the forgiveness of sin consistent, so far it constituted a part of atonement.

2. The great and principal part of atonement, and which the Scriptures most frequently bring into view, was Christ's sufferings. These were essential to his character as mediator and surety. It was necessary that he should be "made perfect through sufferings." It was essential that he should maintain the honor of the divine law, by fulfilling it in its penalty, as in its precepts. Hence he said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matt. 5: 17, 18. Hence the sufferings of Christ were so far from disrespecting or abrogating the law, that they "magnified it and made it honorable." One jot or one tittle did not pass till all was fulfilled. Hence it appears, that Christ endured the real penalty of the law in its full extent and meaning. Without a penalty, the law would have had no force. It would have been no more than advice. As the penalty, therefore, was essential to its nature, and as one tittle of the law did not pass till all was fulfilled, it follows that Christ endured the penalty of the law. This is fully evident from the descriptions given of his death and sufferings. Isa. 53: 6; "The Lord

hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." "My righteous servant shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." To bear iniquity, to be stricken for transgression, signify to endure the evil which sin deserves. It is through Christ's sufferings only, that we can obtain redemption and remission of sin. Thus says Paul, Eph. 1: 7; "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." We are said to be redeemed by "the precious blood of Christ." When Christ's blood is spoken of, it is in allusion to the sacrifices under the law, which were typical of his death, and pointed to that as making atonement. "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." Lev. 17: 11. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins." Hence the sufferings of Christ appear to have constituted the most essential part, and some contend the whole, of atonement.

Secondly. I proceed to explain the necessity of atonement. Why could not God pardon without it? Why should he require sufferings before he would extend forgiveness to the guilty? Would not his mercy have appeared more conspicuous in remitting the offences of his creatures, on their repentance only, without exacting satisfaction? Is Deity so inexorable, that he will show no favor until the full penalty of the law be endured, and all his wrath exhausted? These difficulties will perhaps be obviated by the following train of thought.

1. The government which God exercises over his rational creatures, is not a government of force, but of law. Nothing, therefore, can take place under this government that is arbitrary, or inconsistent with the real meaning and authority of law. The obedience required of the subjects, is urged by the promise of reward to the performer, and the threatening of punishment to the transgressor. This promise and threatening are predictions of things to take place, on the concurrence of particular specified events. On one hand stands the great Legislator, promulging his law, and enforcing it with the penal sanction; on the other stands the whole system of rational beings, receiving that law as an unalterable rule of righteousness. These beings become transgressors. They incur that penalty, for the execution of which God's truth and faithfulness are pledged. How, then, shall God, without executing this penalty, maintain the dignity of his character, and the authority of his law? Not to execute the penalty, is to give up his government; to repeal, to annul his law, and to fail in the accomplishment of his prediction. Hence it appears, that punishments are necessary in God's moral government. They support his law, they deter transgressors, and manifest divine displeasure against sin. But why cannot God govern his creatures without punishments? This is the same thing as to ask why he cannot govern them without laws. He can. He can govern them by force. But they will

cease to be moral, accountable creatures. Laws, then, are essential to moral government. Punishments are equally essential to laws. A law which has no penalty, or, which is the same, a law that is not executed, ceases to be a law. It loses all its force, and becomes mere advice. Therefore, if sinners are to be forgiven, it must be done in consistency with the meaning and authority of law; for God cannot contradict himself. The legislative and executive parts of his government must coincide. Hence, if sinners are to be forgiven, something equivalent to the punishment of sinners must be done in order to fulfil the real meaning of the law, and to support government. Hence, in order to a consistent exercise of mercy, atonement is necessary on the same principle, and for the same end, that punishments would be necessary without atonement. Viewed in this light, atonement is a substitute for punishments. It not only answers all the ends of these, but many more. If these were necessary without atonement, atonement without these was equally necessary. If, then, we maintain that God can exercise pardon merely on account of the sinner's repentance, we must maintain that laws can exist in full force without any penalties; or that God can govern the moral system by laws, without carrying them into execution. A greater absurdity than this cannot be conceived.

2. Atonement will appear necessary, if we consider it in the propriety of means adapted to the accomplishment of an end. The great plan which God has adopted for the existence, government, and final state of rational creatures, is undoubtedly the best possible, and will ultimately terminate in the highest and most noble purpose. To suppose the contrary, is to suppose imperfection in Deity. For the present plan has been brought into operation by infinite wisdom, which must discern and choose the best; by infinite goodness, which must prompt the best; by infinite power, which can execute the best. Of consequence, every part of this great plan must be so arranged, as directly to conduce to the highest ultimate end of the whole. This end has been shown to be God himself, or the display of his glory. Atonement, considered in relation to the moral state of man, and the display of God's mercy, in saving him from that state, appears indispensably necessary. Unless God's mercy be displayed, his character will not appear to his creatures in its full glory; and consequently the highest happiness of the system will not be secured. If the display of mercy be necessary, atonement is necessary. Mercy appears great in proportion to the greatness of the danger, misery, or ruin from which it delivers. The moral state of man has been shown to be a state of the greatest danger, a state of condemnation and total ruin. Atonement implies an acknowledgment of that state as it really is, and of the perfect justice of God, should he leave man in it without

any prospect of relief. Atonement, therefore, is the only thing which presents salvation as an act of real grace, and brings into view God, plenteous in mercy. All the glory that will ultimately redound to God, from the salvation of sinners, will arise through atonement, as the great means by which God will accomplish the high and ultimate end of creation. Atonement was necessary, therefore, to the perfection of God's great plan.

3. The necessity of atonement appears from the consideration that atonement has been made, and from the frequent mention of it in the Scriptures as the only ground on which we can obtain salvation. It is very unreasonable to suppose that Christ would have died for sin, unless his death had been absolutely necessary. In a view of the amazing sufferings he was about to endure, he prayed to his Father, saying, "If thou be willing, remove this cup from me." Luke 22:42. Had not his death been necessary, this prayer would undoubtedly have been answered. But without his death, neither the salvation of men could have been effected, nor the glory of God displayed. Hence Christ said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Paul says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." In Leviticus it is said, "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." 17:11. Christ, at the institution of the supper, said, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Paul says, "We are justified by his blood." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." The redeemed are represented as saying, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Rev. 5:9. Yet we are assured that "there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." If these expressions do not point out the necessity of Christ's sufferings to make atonement for sin, it is impossible for language to point it out.

Thirdly. I now proceed to explain the nature of atonement.

The limits to which I am necessarily confined in this discourse, forbid me to enter into a full and extensive discussion of this part of the subject. I shall therefore confine myself to the solution of what appears most embarrassing, and difficult to be understood. The nature of atonement has, in some degree, and unavoidably so, been brought into view in the preceding parts of this discourse. What I propose to illustrate under this head is comprised in the following propositions: that the nature of atonement was such, that though it rendered full satisfaction to justice, yet it inferred no obligation on justice for the deliverance of sinners, but left their deliverance an act of pure grace. This will

doubtless be considered by many as a great absurdity and positive contradiction. For how can full atonement for sin be consistent with forgiveness? If Christ has paid the debt for sinners, if he has given himself a ransom, if he has purchased them, how can they be said to be pardoned, or delivered by grace? If an equivalent price be paid for their redemption, may they not on the ground of justice demand salvation? How can those be subjects of forgiveness who owe nothing? If Christ has paid the debt, will it not be injustice to exact it again of the sinner? A man is arrested for debt, and thrown into prison. Property is demanded for the discharge of his obligation. Property is advanced by a third person. The creditor receives it. Is not the debt paid? Can the creditor in justice demand any thing further of the debtor? May not the debtor on the foot of justice demand deliverance from prison? May he not demand his obligation, since it is cancelled by the property advanced? Is not the creditor bound by justice to comply with these demands? Would not a refusal to comply be deemed dishonesty, injustice, and cruelty? The creditor complies. But does he show any grace or favor to the debtor? Does he treat the debtor more favorably than he ought to treat him? Does he do any thing more than he ought to do, or more than the debtor has a right to demand? The creditor exclaims, "I have treated this man with so much mercy and favor, that I gave him up his obligation when he had paid the whole sum for which it was given." Who does not perceive the absurdity of this? Thus it may be objected that full atonement for sin is inconsistent with forgiveness. But the Scripture insists on full atonement, and yet everywhere holds up the deliverance of sinners as an act of pure grace. This is a gordian knot in divinity. Let us not by violence cut it asunder, but attempt fairly to untie it.

Before we proceed, it may not be improper to observe, that the greatest difficulty with which this part of this subject is embarrassed, appears to have originated in the want of an accurate definition of justice and grace. Theologians have said much about these, yet few have defined them with sufficient accuracy to render them intelligible, or make them appear consistent.

I shall, therefore,

First, explain the meaning of the word grace.

Secondly, the meaning of the word justice.

Thirdly, apply these explanations to this part of the subject, with a view to solve the difficulty with which it is embarrassed.

First. What are we to understand by the word grace?

We are to understand by it the exercise of favor, and consequently the bestowment of good where evil is deserved, and may in justice be

inflicted. Where there is no exposure to evil, there is no room for the exercise of grace. He who is not guilty is not a subject of pardon. He who does not deserve punishment cannot be said to be freed from it by an act of favor. Grace therefore always implies, that the subject of it is unworthy, and would have no reason to complain, if all the evil to which he is exposed were inflicted on him. Grace will appear great according to the view which the sinner has of his own ill desert, and the consciousness he possesses of the punishment or evil from which he is delivered. Grace and justice are opposite in their nature. Grace gives; justice demands. Their provinces are entirely separate. Though they are united, yet they are not blended in man's salvation. Hence that remarkable passage in Rom. 11 : 6 ; "If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work."

Secondly. What are we to understand by the word justice? It assumes three denominations, — commutative, distributive, and public.

1. Commutative justice respects property only.* "It consists in an equal exchange of benefits," or in restoring to every man his own.

2. Distributive justice respects the moral character of men. It respects them as accountable creatures, obedient or disobedient. It consists in ascertaining their virtue and sin, and in bestowing just rewards, or inflicting just punishments.

3. Public or general justice respects what is fit or right, as to the character of God and the good of the universe. In this sense justice comprises all moral goodness, and properly means the righteousness or rectitude of God, by which all his actions are guided, with a supreme regard to the greatest good. Justice, considered in this view, forbids that any thing should take place in the great plan of God, which would tarnish his glory or subvert the authority of his law.

Thirdly. Let us now apply these explanations to the solution of the difficulty under consideration.

1. Did Christ satisfy commutative justice? Certainly not. Commutative justice had no concern in his sufferings. Men had taken no property from God, and consequently were under no obligation to restore any. But do not the Scriptures represent Christ as giving himself a ransom, and as buying his people with a price? They do. They also represent men, while under the influence of sin, as prisoners, slaves, captives. These expressions are all figurative, borrowed from sensible to express moral or spiritual things, and therefore are not to be explained as if liter-

* See Doddridge's Lectures, p. 190 ; and also Dr. Edwards' third sermon, preached at New Haven, 1785, p. 38.

ally true. If we say that Christ hath redeemed us, that he hath bought us, that he has paid the debt and discharged us, — if we have any consistent meaning it must be this : That in consequence of what Christ has done, we are delivered from sin, in as great a consistency with justice, as a debtor is delivered from his obligation, or the demands of law, when his debt is paid. That is, God extends pardon in such a way, through Christ, that he does not injure the authority of his law, but supports it as effectually as if he inflicted punishment.

2. Did Christ satisfy distributive justice? Certainly not. Distributive justice respects personal character only. It condemns men because they are sinners, and rewards them because they are righteous. Their good or ill desert are the only ground on which distributive or moral justice respects them. But good and ill desert are personal. They imply consciousness of praise or blame, and cannot be transferred or altered so as to render the subjects of them more or less worthy. What Christ did, therefore, did not take ill desert from men, nor did it place them in such a situation that God would act unjustly to punish them according to their deeds. If a man has sinned, it will always remain a truth that he has sinned, and that according to distributive justice he deserves punishment. In this sense justice admits the condemnation of Paul as much as it does of Judas. The salvation of the former is secured, and his condemnation rendered impossible by another consideration.

3. Did Christ satisfy public justice? Undoubtedly he did. This is evident from what has already been advanced respecting the necessity of atonement, in order to a consistent exercise of mercy. Christ's sufferings rendered it right and fit, with respect to God's character and the good of the universe, to forgive sin. The atonement made by Christ presented the law, the nature of sin, and the displeasure of God against it, in such a light, that no injury would accrue to the moral system, no imputation would be against the righteousness of the great Legislator, though he should forgive the sinner, and instate him in eternal felicity. Perfect justice, therefore, is done to the universe, though all transgressors be not punished according to their personal demerit. The death of Christ, therefore, is to be considered as a great, important, and public transaction, respecting God and the whole system of rational beings. Public justice requires, that neither any of these be injured, nor the character and government of the great Legislator disrespected, by the pardon of any. In these respects public justice is perfectly satisfied by the death of Christ. This is evident by the following passages of Scripture. Rom. 3 : 21 ; "But now the righteousness (rectitude or justice) of God is manifested without the law, being witnessed by the law." Before the

introduction of these words the apostle had demonstrated that the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, were all under sin and condemnation. "Now," says he, "we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God." All, if treated according to distributive justice, must be found guilty and condemned. "Therefore," says Paul, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." How, then, it might be inquired, can any be justified, and yet God not give up his law, but appear perfectly righteous and just? The answer follows. "By the righteousness of God, which is manifested without the law, being witnessed by the law." Rom. 3: 21. That is, the righteousness or justice of God, with respect to himself and the universe, is clearly manifested, though he do not execute the law, as to distributive justice, on transgressors, but pardon and save them. This is so far from being contrary to the law, that it is witnessed by the law. For the sufferings of Christ demonstrate that God no more gives up the penalty of the law than if he should inflict it on the original transgressor. The righteousness or justice manifested in this way is through Christ; "whom," says Paul, "God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." For what end? "To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins." "To declare at this time his righteousness (for this purpose) that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3: 25, 26. Hence it is said, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. 10: 4. That is, the end of the law is as fully answered in the salvation of men by Christ, as it would have been if they had never transgressed, but had obtained life by perfect obedience. It is said, "If we confess our sins, he is just to forgive us our sins." 1 John, 1: 9. He is just to himself, to his law, to the universe. God styles himself "a just God and a Saviour." Isa. 45: 21. Hence justice and mercy harmonize in man's salvation.

From the preceding statement of the nature of grace and justice, it appears,

First. That atonement, and consequently the pardon of sin, have no respect to commutative justice.

Secondly. That the sufferings of Christ did not satisfy distributive justice, since that respects personal character only; and therefore, with respect to distributive justice, salvation is an act of perfect grace.

Thirdly. That Christ's sufferings satisfied public justice; and therefore, with respect to public justice, salvation is an act of perfect justice.

Thus the seeming inconsistency between full atonement for sin, and pure grace in salvation, vanishes and disappears. The system of redemption rises into view like a magnificent edifice, displaying the greatest order, proportion, and beauty.

Having advanced what I proposed, respecting the matter, the necessity, and the nature of atonement, I shall conclude with a few inferences.

1. From the preceding discourse may be inferred, the indissoluble connection between the doctrine of atonement and the divinity of Christ. For it has been demonstrated, that the penalty of the law is endless misery, and that that penalty was, in its full extent and meaning, endured by Christ, in order to a consistent exercise of mercy. No finite created being could, in a limited time, endure the full penalty of the law in any respect. Yet we are assured that Christ endured it when "he was made a curse." As he comprised in his divine nature an infinite quantity of existence, he could in a limited time endure a punishment which to a creature would be endless. This does not imply that the divine nature suffered. This was impossible. In this nature consisted the personality of Christ. As he took into union with it the human nature, he possessed a perfect consciousness of the oneness of that nature with himself. Hence the sufferings of the human nature derive all their worth and value from the divine nature. The divinity of Christ, therefore, was essential to atonement, and was the only consideration that made his sufferings answer all the ends of moral government, so as to render the salvation of sinners consistent or possible. It is unreasonable to suppose, that the Son of God would have been sent to effect the work of redemption, if it could have been effected by a mere creature; yet we are assured, that the "word that was God" "was made flesh." Hence, those who entertain such an opinion of the law of God, and the moral state of man, as to see no need of atonement, reject the divinity of Christ. But so long as atonement shall appear necessary, so long the doctrine of Christ's divinity must be admitted, and so long it will appear essential to Christianity.

2. From the preceding statement of the doctrine of atonement, we infer the erroneousness of that scheme of salvation which represents Christ suffering on the ground of distributive justice. If justice could demand his sufferings, he was treated according to his own personal character, and of consequence his sufferings had no more merit than the sufferings of a transgressor. If these were just, in the same sense that those of the sinner would be just, he endured no more than he ought to endure. His death, therefore, on this plan, made no atonement for sin. Besides, to represent Christ's sufferings to be the same as those of his people, is to destroy all grace in salvation. For if in him they have endured all to which they were exposed, from what are they delivered? In what respect are they forgiven?

3. If the preceding account of the law of God and the doctrine of atonement be true, we infer the erroneousness and absurdity of that

scheme, which represents the punishments of a future state to be disciplinary, and designed wholly for the good of the sufferers. According to the Scriptures, there is an exact distribution of punishments in the next world. Those who suffer are represented "receiving according to that they have done," "being rewarded according to their deeds." If so, they are treated according to law. For as this is the true measure of holiness and sin, this alone ascertains the merit and demerit of all actions, and dispenses proportionable rewards and punishments. If those, therefore, in a future state who suffer, suffer according to their deeds, they suffer according to law. If they suffer according to law, they suffer according to justice, and consequently all they deserve, and all to which they were ever exposed. How then are they saved? It is contended that they are saved by grace. How can this be? If they suffer according to their deeds, they suffer all that justice can inflict upon them, and consequently are not pardoned. If they suffer all they deserve, there is no grace in their exemption from further suffering, for justice forbids this. Therefore this scheme of disciplinary punishments, while it pretends to vindicate grace, destroys it. If men are saved after they have suffered according to their deeds, as they are not forgiven, they are not saved by Christ any more than if he had never died. Of consequence, the scheme of disciplinary punishments virtually sets aside the necessity and importance of Christ's sufferings. But revelation assures us, that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3: 11. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4: 12.

4. From the nature of atonement, nothing can with certainty be inferred as to the numbers who shall finally be saved. Had God given us no further light on this subject than what we derive from the sufferings of Christ, whether we consider them for a part or for all of mankind, we should have been wholly in the dark as to the final issue of those sufferings. As the nature and design of these were to render the pardon of sin consistent, it appears that the atonement is as sufficient for the salvation of millions of worlds, as of an individual. For whatever would render one act of pardon consistent, simply as to the exercise of mercy, would render another consistent, and so on *in infinitum*. The number of instances in which atonement will be applied and pardon granted, will depend wholly on the sovereign will and determination of God. One thing is doubtless certain, salvation will be extended as far as is consistent with infinite perfect benevolence, or as far as the glory of God and the highest good of the universe require.

I now conclude this subject, by recommending it to your most serious

and careful attention. You will find it to be the only ground on which you can hope for future felicity. Atonement for sin is a peculiar and distinguishing doctrine of the Christian system. Viewed as the Scriptures represent it, it appears as high above all human thought and invention, as heaven is above earth. Upon a thorough examination it will be found consistent with the soundest reason, suited to advance the happiness of man, and to display the glory of God.

TWO SERMONS.

I.

NECESSITY OF THE ATONEMENT.

II.

THE PURCHASE OF CHRIST'S BLOOD.

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BY

NATHANAEL EMMONS, D.D.

SERMON I.

NECESSITY OF THE ATONEMENT.

THAT HE MIGHT BE JUST, AND THE JUSTIFIER OF HIM WHICH BELIEVETH IN
JESUS. — Romans 3: 26.

THE atonement of Christ lies at the foundation of the gospel, which we cannot understand, without understanding the nature and necessity of the atonement which he made on the cross. But there are various opinions maintained upon this important subject, by those who profess to believe the gospel. It becomes us, therefore, to examine this subject seriously and critically, that we may discover wherein his atonement consists, and for what purpose it was made. The apostle, having proved in the preceding verses that all mankind are by nature in a state of guilt and condemnation, proceeds to show how believers are forgiven, or justified, through the redemption, or atonement, of Christ. Speaking of himself and other believers, he says, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins — that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." According to this representation, it was absolutely necessary for Christ to make atonement for sin by his blood, on the cross, in order that God might be just, in forgiving or justifying penitent believers. Though it was not necessary that God should forgive the transgressors of his law, yet it was necessary that an atonement should be made to show that he was just to himself, as well as merciful to them, if he did grant them the remission of sins. So that we may safely conclude,

That the atonement of Christ was necessary entirely on God's account. It is proposed to show that this was so, and why it was so.

I. It is to be shown that the atonement of Christ was necessary entirely on God's account.

If the atonement of Christ were not necessary on the account of sinners, then, if it were necessary at all, it must have been necessary on God's account. But it is easy to see that it could not be necessary on the account of sinners. When Adam had sinned, and involved himself and his posterity in guilt and ruin, God might have destroyed him and them, as he destroyed the fallen angels, according to the rules of strict justice. By treating them in such a manner, he would have done honor to his character, to his law and to his government, in the eyes of all his intelligent creatures, without doing the least injury to them. As sinners, they deserve to suffer the penalty of the law which they had broken; and God might have inflicted upon them that eternal death which is the proper wages of sin. On the other hand, he might have saved them in a sovereign manner, without doing injustice to them, or to any other of his creatures. If God had chosen to save all mankind without an atonement, he would have treated them better than they deserved, which could have been no injury to them; nor could it have been any injury to the fallen angels to have treated fallen men better than he treated them. As he treated them as well as they deserved, they could have no ground to complain, if he treated mankind better than they deserved. There was, therefore, no necessity for the atonement of Christ on the account of sinners. If no atonement had been made, God might have treated them according to their deserts, or better than their deserts, without doing them, or any other creature, the least injury. When Adam fled from the presence of God in despair, it was not because he feared that his Creator and Lawgiver would injure him. He knew that God would not injure him if he destroyed him, and much less if he saved him. All sinners now know the same. When they reflect upon their sinful, perishing state, they are sensible that they deserve to die, and that eternal death is not a punishment greater than their guilt. They see nothing, on their own account, why God may not exercise his justice or his grace towards them, without an atonement. They know that he would not injure them, if he should exercise either his justice or his grace towards them. Consequently, they see no need of an atonement on their own account. If no atonement had been made, God might have determined to destroy all the human race, or to have saved all the human race, without doing any injury to them, or to any other created beings. It hence appears that there was no necessity for the atonement of Christ, on account of sinners themselves. But the apostle assures us in the text, that an atonement was necessary on God's account, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

II. I proceed to show why the atonement of Christ was necessary on God's account, in order to render it consistent with his amiable and glorious character to extend pardoning mercy to this fallen, guilty, perishing world.

If we can only discover why Adam, after he had eaten the forbidden fruit and incurred the penalty of the divine law, despaired of pardoning mercy, we can easily see why an atonement for sin was absolutely necessary, in order to render it consistent for God to exercise pardoning grace to sinners. Adam knew that God was perfectly good, and that his perfect goodness would necessarily dispose him to do good, not only to the innocent, but to the guilty. Why, then, did he despair of mercy? The only reason was, that he knew that God was just, as well as good; and that it was morally impossible that he should exercise his goodness inconsistently with his justice. This banished from his mind every gleam of hope. The more he realized the goodness of God, the more he realized the justice of God; and the more he realized the justice of God, the more he despaired of pardoning mercy. For he could not see how it was possible that God should be just to himself and to his law, and yet pardon his transgression; nor was there an angel in heaven who could see how this could be brought about. A servant who has disobeyed a good master is more afraid of being punished than a servant who has disobeyed a bad master. A child who has disobeyed a good parent is more afraid of being punished than a child who has disobeyed a bad parent. The reason is the same in both cases. The servant and the child know that goodness implies justice; and justice is a disposition to punish. Adam knew that the perfect goodness of God implied his perfect justice; and that his perfect justice implied an inflexible disposition to punish the guilty. It is not probable that Adam thought of an atonement; and if he did, he could not see how an atonement could be made; and therefore he utterly despaired of pardon and salvation. As Adam could not see how God could consistently forgive him without an atonement, so none of his posterity can see how God can consistently forgive them without an atonement. He was a true representative of all who should be and now are in his state of guilt and condemnation. As God could not have been just to himself in forgiving Adam without an atonement, so he cannot be just to himself in forgiving any of his guilty posterity without an atonement. And as God did determine to show mercy to sinners, so it was absolutely necessary that Christ should make an atonement for their sins. The atonement of Christ was necessary entirely on God's account. The necessity of Christ's atonement, in case God determined to save sinners, originated entirely in his immutable justice. He must be just to himself; that is, he must display his essen-

tial and amiable attribute of retributive justice in pardoning or justifying those who deserve to be punished. There was nothing in men that required an atonement, and there was nothing in God that required an atonement but his justice. All the moral perfections of the Deity are comprised in the pure love of benevolence. God is love. Before the foundation of the world, there was no ground for considering love as divided into various and distinct attributes. But after the creation, new relations arose; and in consequence of new relations, more obligations were formed, both on the side of the Creator and on that of his creatures. Before created beings existed, God's love was exercised wholly towards himself. But after moral beings were brought into existence, it was right in the nature of things that he should exercise right affections towards them, according to their moral characters. Hence the goodness, the justice, and mercy of God are founded in the nature of things. That is, so long as God remains the Creator, and men remain his creatures, he is morally obliged to exercise these different and distinct feelings towards them. He must be disposed to do good to the innocent, to punish the guilty, and at the same time to forgive them. Now there never was any difficulty in the way of God's doing good to the innocent, nor in the way of his punishing the guilty; but there was a difficulty in sparing and forgiving the wicked. God's goodness is a disposition to do good to the innocent; his justice is a disposition to punish the guilty; and his mercy is a disposition to pardon and save the guilty. The great difficulty, therefore, in the way of man's salvation, was, to reconcile God's disposition to punish with his disposition to forgive; or in other words, to reconcile his justice with his mercy. This was a difficulty in the divine character, and a still greater difficulty in the divine government. For God had revealed his justice in his moral government. He had given a law to man, and in that law had clearly exhibited his justice. In the penalty of the law he had declared that the transgressor deserved eternal punishment; that he had a right to inflict eternal punishment; that he had power to inflict eternal punishment; and that he had a disposition to inflict eternal punishment. There was a clear and full exhibition of retributive justice, in the first law given to man. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This law, clothed with all the authority of God, man violated, and exposed himself to the awful penalty. And in consequence of this single act of disobedience, his posterity became involved in the same state of wretchedness and guilt. What now could be done? It is easy to see that justice might be done without the least difficulty; for this had been done in a similar case. The fallen angels had been doomed to hopeless ruin for their first offence. But how could pardoning grace be displayed? This none of the intelligent

creation could tell. The angels of light could not tell; for they had seen those who kept not their first estate, excluded from heaven, and the door of mercy for ever shut against them. Man could not tell. He knew that the sentence of death was passed upon him, which might be justly and immediately executed. How then could grace be displayed consistently with justice? This question God alone was able to solve. He knew that he could be just to himself, if his justice were displayed by the sufferings of a proper substitute in the room of sinners. He knew that the sufferings of a substitute in the room of sinners, would both display his justice and support the honor of his law and government. And as he saw that such a substitute was necessary, he appointed Christ to take the place of sinners, and to suffer and die the just for the unjust. Christ was the Son of his love, the second person in the sacred Trinity, and equal with himself in every divine perfection. He was the only substitute to be found in the universe, who was competent to the great work of making a complete atonement for sin. Him therefore the Father set forth to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins. And though he was once "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," that he might taste death for every man. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." It was indispensably necessary that Christ should suffer, when he took the place of sinners to make atonement for their sins. For suffering is the penalty which God threatens to inflict upon transgressors of his law, to display his vindictive justice. It was only by causing Christ to suffer in the room of sinners, that God could display his vindictive justice towards them. Accordingly we read: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief;" and that "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." By inflicting such sufferings upon Christ, when he took the place of a substitute in the room of sinners, God as clearly displayed his hatred of sin and his inflexible disposition to punish it, as if he had made all mankind personally miserable for ever.

It is agreeable to the common opinion and practice of mankind in war, to hold prisoners as hostages; so that in case the enemy violate the law of arms, by abusing or putting to death the captives taken, they may justly retaliate, by treating the hostages as the abused captives were

treated. So General Washington proposed to act, when a British officer, contrary to the law of nations, killed Captain Huddy, an American officer, after he had surrendered. He determined to put Captain Asgill, a British officer whom he had in his hands, to death, in the room of the man who killed Captain Huddy. And had he actually done this, he would have displayed his just displeasure against the murderer and all who justified and protected him. Or, in other words, he would have done justice to himself, by making it appear that he meant to maintain the dignity of his character as a commander-in-chief, and to support his authority in punishing all who should dare to violate the law of arms. He would not, indeed, have done distributive justice to the murderer, nor have prevented his being put to death, if he could have been found and apprehended.

Just so, God, by subjecting the Son of his love to death in the room of sinners, could display his immutable disposition to punish sin, in the most striking and awful manner. Accordingly, when Christ actually took the place of sinners, and poured out his soul unto death on the cross, his sufferings in their room as clearly displayed the vindictive justice of God to angels and men, and the whole intelligent creation, as if he had made them all personally miserable for ever. By subjecting Christ to sufferings and death on the cross, God has done justice to himself, and made a complete atonement for sin. He, not Christ, made the atonement. He bruised him and put him to grief; his sword pierced his heart and shed his blood on the cross. So the prophet predicted: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." This prediction Christ applied to himself just after he had instituted a standing memorial of his death, and just before his sufferings began in the garden. "Then saith Jesus unto his disciples, all ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." Christ knew that it was absolutely necessary that the Father should put him to death, in order to display his justice in the forgiveness or remission of sins. And it was on this ground solely that he cordially submitted to die on the cross. This he expressly declared before he suffered: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." It was the Father that made atonement for sin, by putting Christ to death on the cross by his own hand. By making his own Son a substitute for sinners, and putting him to death in their room, he declared his righteousness to the whole universe, so that he can now "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." This was the great and important end

to be answered by an atonement. And in order to answer this end, Christ's atonement was absolutely necessary.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If the atonement of Christ was necessary entirely on God's account, that he might be just in exercising pardoning mercy to penitent and believing sinners, then it was universal, and sufficient for the pardon and salvation of the non-elect, as well as for the pardon and salvation of the elect. Some believe and maintain the doctrine of a limited atonement. They suppose that Christ died to make atonement for the elect, exclusively of the non-elect. This opinion appears to be founded on a wrong notion of the nature and design of the atonement. It was designed to maintain and display the justice of God in the remission of sins. And if it has rendered it consistent with the justice of God to exercise pardoning mercy to one sinner, it has rendered it equally consistent with his justice to exercise pardoning mercy to all sinners. The atonement of Christ has the same favorable aspect upon the non-elect as upon the elect. It opens as wide a door of mercy to the one as to the other. It removes all natural obstacles out of the way of the salvation of either, because it renders it consistent with the justice of God to pardon and save a part, or the whole of mankind, according to his sovereign pleasure and eternal purpose. The atonement of Christ has laid God under no obligation to save one of mankind, but left him at full liberty to save a part, or the whole of the human race. It is generally allowed that God does in the gospel offer salvation to all; but how can he consistently offer salvation to all, if Christ has not made atonement for all? If Christ has not made atonement for the non-elect, it is no more consistent for God to offer salvation to the non-elect, than to offer salvation to the fallen angels, for whom, all will allow, he has made no atonement. Besides, the Scripture not only represents God as inviting all men to accept of pardon and salvation through the blood of Christ, but represents him as threatening to punish all eternally who refuse to accept the offers of pardon in Christ's name. This looks perfectly inconsistent with the retributive justice of God, unless the atonement be universal. What can be more unjust than to punish sinners for not accepting a salvation which was never provided for them? And it never was provided for them, if Christ did not, by his sufferings and death, make atonement for them. But Christ commands his ministers to say to all, without exception, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." This, as well as many other passages of Scripture, clearly proves that the atonement of Christ is not limited, but extends to all the children of men. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that who-

soever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And the apostle John says, "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

2. If the atonement of Christ was necessary entirely on God's account, to satisfy his justice towards himself in exercising pardoning mercy to the guilty, then it did not satisfy justice towards sinners themselves. Justice, as it respects them, stands in full force against them. Nothing which Christ did or suffered, altered their characters, obligations, or deserts. His obedience did not free them from their obligation to obey the divine law, nor did his sufferings free them from their desert of suffering the penalty of the divine law. Both the precept and penalty of the divine law are founded in the nature of things; and Christ did not come to destroy these, nor could he destroy them, by obedience or sufferings. The atonement which Christ has made, has left sinners in the same state that they were in before. Its whole efficacy respects God's character. It has completely satisfied his justice in exercising mercy to all penitent, believing sinners. This is what the assembly of divines evidently mean in reply to the question, "How does Christ execute the office of a priest?" They answer, "By his once offering up himself a sacrifice, to satisfy divine justice." This was all that he meant to do, or could do, or that needed to be done, in order to make a complete atonement for sin. But many suppose that Christ, by his obedience and death, did a great deal more for sinners than for God. They suppose that he suffered in the room of the elect, and bore the penalty of the law in their stead, so that he paid the full debt of suffering which they owed to God. And on this account, they suppose that God cannot in justice punish them for any of their past, present, or future sins. They likewise suppose that Christ obeyed the law perfectly in their room, and by his perfect obedience paid the full debt of obedience which they owed to God; so that they are no longer bound to obey the precepts, nor exposed to suffer the penalty, of the law. Hence they suppose that there are no terms or conditions of salvation to be performed, in order to pardon and justification. Christ has done all in their stead, and they have nothing to do but to believe that he has done all, and that they are completely safe. This is true Antinomianism, which is believed and propagated at this day by various sectarians. But all these notions are groundless and absurd, if the atonement was necessary entirely on God's account, and not on the account of sinners; and if all that Christ did and suffered, he did and suffered to render it consistent with the justice of God to forgive and save penitent believers.

3. If the atonement of Christ was necessary entirely on God's account, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth, then he did

not merit any thing at the hand of God for himself or for mankind. There is no phrase more common and familiar than that of *the merits of Christ*; but it is generally misunderstood and misapplied. Though Christ suffered the just for the unjust, though he made his soul an offering for sin, and though he suffered most excruciating pains in the garden and on the cross, yet he did not lay God under the least obligation, in point of justice, to pardon and save a single sinner. His sufferings could not lay God under any obligations to do any thing for him, and much less for any of the human race. God is above being bound by any being in the universe; and he cannot bind himself, otherwise than by a free, voluntary, gratuitous promise. Though God promises to pardon every true believer, yet he promises to do it as an act of grace, and not as an act of justice. For the atonement of Christ did not lay him under the least obligation, in point of justice, to pardon even true penitents. Accordingly, the apostle says that believers are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." And as Christ did not merit pardon for believers by his sufferings, so he did not merit a reward for them by his obedience. It is true, God has promised to reward him for his obedience unto death, but his promise is a promise of grace, and not of justice. So he has promised to reward every man for the least good he does, even for giving a cup of cold water in sincerity. But though he promises to reward all good men according to their works, or for their works, yet his promise to them is a promise of grace, not of justice, and without the least regard to Christ's obedience as the ground of it. The truth is, Christ never merited any thing at the hand of God, for himself or for sinners, by his obedience and sufferings. By obeying and suffering in the room of sinners, he only rendered it consistent for God to renew or not to renew, to pardon or not to pardon, to reward or not to reward, sinners; but did not lay him under the least obligation, in point of justice, to do either of these things for them. There was no merit in Christ's obedience and sufferings; and there is no propriety in using the term, merits of Christ. The use of this phraseology has led multitudes into gross and dangerous errors in respect to faith in Christ, justification through his atonement, and the future rewards of the righteous. It is of great importance, therefore, to form clear and just ideas of Christ's atonement, in order to avoid those errors.

4. If the sole design of Christ's atonement was to satisfy the justice of God towards himself, then he exercises the same free grace in pardoning sinners through the atonement, as if no atonement had been made. It has been considered as a great difficulty to reconcile free pardon with full satisfaction to divine justice. The difficulty has arisen from a supposition that the atonement of Christ was designed to pay the debt of suf-

ferings which sinners owed to God. If this were the design of the atonement, it would be difficult to see the grace of God in pardoning sinners on that account. For there is no grace in forgiving a debtor after his debt is paid, whether by himself or by another. But sin is not a debt, and cannot be paid by suffering. Christ's suffering in the room of sinners did not alter the nature of their sin, nor take away their just deserts of punishment. There is the same grace of God in forgiving them through the atonement, as if no atonement had been made. This the apostle asserts. He says, God justifies, that is, pardons, believers freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. The atonement of Christ rendered it just for God to exercise his grace in pardoning believers, though it did not remove their guilt and ill desert in the least degree. None will deny that it was grace in God to send Christ into the world to make atonement for sin, or that it was grace in Christ to come into the world and suffer and die to make atonement for sin; and it is certain that the atonement he made did not lay God under obligation, in point of justice, to pardon sinners on account of his atonement; it therefore plainly follows, that God exercises as real grace in pardoning sinners through the atonement of Christ, as in sending him to make atonement. Free pardon, therefore, is perfectly consistent with free grace.

5. If the atonement of Christ was necessary entirely on God's account, then it is absurd to suppose that it was merely expedient. The Socinians deny that Christ died as a vicarious sacrifice, to make any atonement for sin. They say that God is bound to forgive sinners upon the ground of repentance only, and that he does actually forgive them on that ground. But there are many Trinitarians who believe that Christ did make atonement for sin, who yet suppose that his atonement was not absolutely necessary, but only expedient. They suppose that God might have pardoned and saved sinners without any atonement, if he had pleased; and that he pleased to pardon and save sinners through an atonement, merely because it was the most expedient or best way of saving them, but not because it was the only possible way. It is granted that there was no more necessity of God's saving sinners at all, than there was of giving them existence; and certainly there was no necessity of giving them existence. For his own pleasure they are and were created. But after he had given them existence, and they had become sinners, it was morally impossible that he should pardon and save them without an atonement. It did not depend upon his mere pleasure, whether he should save them with or without an atonement. On the supposition that he determined to save them, an atonement was as necessary as his own immutable justice. There was no other possible way of saving them. And so

Christ himself supposed; for he said to God, in the prospect of his sufferings, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." There is no reason to think that God would have subjected the Son of his love to all the pains and reproaches of the cross, to make atonement for sin, if he could have forgiven it without such an infinitely costly atonement. It is easy to see that if the atonement of Christ was founded on the immutable justice of God, it was as necessary as his immutable justice.

6. If the atonement of Christ was necessary entirely on God's account, then we may safely conclude that it consisted in his sufferings, and not in his obedience. His obedience had no tendency to display divine justice, which was the only end to be answered by his atonement. His obedience was necessary on his account, to qualify him for making atonement for the disobedient; but his sufferings were necessary on God's account, to display his justice. Accordingly, we find all the predictions and types of Christ, under the Old Testament, represent him as a suffering Saviour. And in the New Testament he is represented as making atonement by his blood, by his sufferings, and by his death. It was by his once offering up himself a sacrifice to divine justice that he made a complete atonement for sin.

7. It appears, from the nature of Christ's atonement, that God can consistently pardon any penitent, believing sinners, on that account. By putting Christ to death on the cross by his own hand, he has declared his righteousness to the whole universe in the remission of sins. He can now be just, and be the justifier of every one that believeth. He can now as consistently pardon one penitent sinner as another; and he is as willing to pardon one penitent as another. He now commands all men everywhere to repent, and assures them that if they do repent and believe, they shall be saved through the redemption that is in Christ. When the eyes of sinners are opened to see the native corruption of their hearts and the sinfulness of their lives, they are ready to think and say that they are too guilty and ill deserving to find mercy in the sight of God. But such views and feelings are totally groundless and sinful. God invites and requires all sinners, without distinction, to accept of pardoning mercy. He is as ready to show mercy to the Gentile as to the Jew; to the greatest as to the smallest sinner; to the oldest as to the youngest sinner; upon the terms of the gospel. Paul, though the chief of sinners, found mercy. Christ says, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." And again he says, "All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me; and whosoever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." But,

8. None can come to Christ and accept of pardoning mercy on account of his atonement, without accepting the punishment of their

iniquities. The great design of the atonement is to show that God would be just in inflicting eternal punishment upon the transgressors of his holy and righteous law. Sinners can see no beauty nor excellence in the character and conduct of Christ, in condemning sin in the flesh, by his sufferings and death on the cross, until they have learned of the Father their just desert of the penalty of the law, and cordially approve of it. Then they will see that there is no other possible way of obtaining pardoning mercy, than through the atonement of Christ. They will see that they must completely renounce all self-dependence and self-righteousness, and rely alone upon the atonement of Christ as the ground of pardon and acceptance in the sight of God. Though Paul once thought, in respect to obedience to the law, that he was blameless, and stood high in the divine favor; yet as soon as he became acquainted with the justice, spirituality, and extent of its precepts and penalty, all the hopes he had built upon the law died, and left him in despair. So that he was constrained to say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Christ told sinners that "the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." No other foundation of pardon can any man lay, than that which God has laid in the atonement of Christ. Sinners must trust in him alone for forgiveness; for it is only for the sake of Christ that God can forgive iniquity, transgressions, and sin, and save the guilty from the wrath to come. But God is now ready to forgive all who feel the spirit, and speak the language, of the publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

SERMON II.

THE PURCHASE OF CHRIST'S BLOOD.

TO FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.
— Acts 20: 28.

PAUL, in his return from Asia to Judea, came to Miletus, and sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church, to whom he related how he had preached and conducted, while he resided among them. And before he takes his leave of them, he gives them the solemn exhortation in the text: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." He added this last clause to enforce the obligation of the elders to be faithful in feeding those whom Christ, as God, had purchased with his atoning blood, or for whom he had made complete atonement for sin, by his sufferings and death on the cross. What I propose in the present discourse is, to consider,

I. What the Scripture says concerning Christ's purchasing salvation for us.

II. What he actually did to purchase salvation for us.

III. In what sense he purchased salvation for us.

I. Let us consider what the Scripture says in respect to Christ's purchasing salvation for us. The inspired writers often speak upon this subject in language very similar to the phraseology in the text. Christ said to his disciples, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Paul said to Timothy, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." Paul said to the Corinthians, "Ye are bought with a price." Christ is represented as *redeeming* men, and they are said to be redeemed by him. Paul said

to the Galatians, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." He said to the Ephesians, "In whom," that is, Christ, "we have redemption through his blood." He called the inheritance to which believers are entitled, a "*purchased possession*." And John said that he heard the voice of them who actually enjoyed this purchased possession in heaven, "and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand who were redeemed from the earth." Thus it appears, from the representations of Scripture, that by Christ's purchasing salvation for us, we are to understand his ransoming, redeeming, or buying us with the price of his precious blood. Let us next consider,

II. What Christ actually did to purchase, to buy, to ransom, and to redeem mankind. Upon this point, the inspired writers give us very full and particular information. It appears that Christ became incarnate before he did any thing, properly speaking, to purchase salvation for us. He was born perfectly holy, and continued perfectly holy and innocent from his birth to his death. This he manifested by perfect obedience to all the laws to which he was subject.

In the first place, he obeyed the moral law, which he was under as man. Accordingly we read, "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." The law required Christ to love his heavenly and human father, and all his brethren of mankind. This law we know he perfectly obeyed, by loving God supremely, by loving and obeying his parents, by obeying all in civil authority, and by loving and seeking the good of the whole human race.

In the next place, he obeyed all the laws of his nation. As a Jew, he was under the Mosaic dispensation, and was bound to obey all the moral, civil, and ceremonial laws, which God had given to his people Israel. And it appears from the history of his life, that he did punctually and universally obey them. He read the Bible, he prayed in secret, he prayed in private with his disciples, he kept the Sabbath, he attended public worship, and annually celebrated the Passover, from twelve years old to the night before his death.

In the last place, he perfectly obeyed the mediatorial law which his Father gave him personally.* He knew his Father's design in sending

* The mediatorial law had respect to him, and to him alone. This law required him to do many things which he was not required to do as a mere man, but only as mediator between God and man. It required him to preach the Gospel to the poor and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and to work miracles. But after he had wrought so many miracles and preached in so many places, the mediatorial

him into the world, and the work which he had given him to do, in order to accomplish his great and gracious design. From his childhood he went about his Father's business, and obeyed his Father's will, and not his own. In obedience to the mediatorial law, when he was about thirty years of age he submitted to the rite of baptism, by which he was inaugurated into his priestly office, and prepared for his public ministry. From that time he went about all Judea, preaching the gospel and working miracles, until in obedience to his Father's particular command, he laid down his life on the cross.

Thus Christ was perfectly obedient, from the beginning to the end of his life, and persevered in obedience amidst the severest conflicts, trials, and sufferings. He suffered extreme poverty, and had not where to lay his head. He was despised and rejected of men. He was tempted and buffeted by Satan. He was called a friend of publicans and sinners, and was said to act in concert with the devil. And from the time he had celebrated the last Passover to the moment of his death, he suffered all the neglect, perfidy, reproach, injustice, and cruelty, that the malice and power of man could inflict. He was betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his disciples, denied by Peter, abused by the chief priest, derided by the populace, mocked by Herod, and finally condemned by Pilate to be crucified between two malefactors as an infamous blasphemer. We are now prepared to consider,

III. In what sense Christ purchased salvation for us, by what he did and suffered.

Divines have preached and written a great deal concerning Christ's purchasing salvation for us, by what he did and suffered. Some have maintained that he purchased salvation for all mankind. Some have supposed that he purchased salvation for the church, or the elect only. Some have thought that he purchased salvation in a literal sense; but others have supposed that he did not purchase or buy salvation for any. President Edwards, in his *History of Redemption*, occupies fifty pages in

law required him to perform a far more arduous, painful, and self-denying act of obedience, and that was to lay down his life, and be obedient even unto the death of the cross. He knew that his Father had appointed the time, the place, and the circumstances of his death. Accordingly when the appointed time came, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem and there make his soul an offering for sin. Though the prospect of this awful event filled his soul with sorrow, and caused him to sweat as it were great drops of blood, and his agonies finally extorted the exclamation, "Eloi, eloi, lama, sabachthani, — My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Yet he submissively gave up the ghost, and became obedient even unto the cruel death of the cross. Thus Christ paid perfect obedience to every moral, ceremonial, and mediatorial precept from the beginning to the end of his life, and in this respect he was a lamb without spot and blemish.

illustrating what he calls the *purchase* of redemption. And among other things, he says, "Christ purchased our redemption both by his satisfaction and his merit. The price Christ lays down, pays our debt, and so satisfies; by its intrinsic value, and by the agreement between the Father and the Son, it procures our title to happiness, and so merits. The satisfaction of Christ is to free us from misery, and the merit of Christ is to purchase happiness for us;" that is, as he expressly and repeatedly declares, for the *elect only*. This diversity of opinion upon the same subject makes it a matter of importance to inquire critically and impartially in what sense Christ did not, and in what sense he did, purchase salvation for us. The strict, literal meaning of the word purchase is as well understood as any English word in common use; but the main question before us is to ascertain, in what sense the word purchase in the text is to be understood, whether literally or figuratively. Here I would observe,

1. That Christ did not purchase salvation for us in a literal sense. He did not pay our debt of punishment, nor our debt of obedience. Though he suffered in our stead, yet he did not suffer the punishment which we deserve, and which the law threatens to us. He never transgressed the law, and so the law could not threaten any punishment to him. His sufferings were no punishment, and much less our punishment. His sufferings were by no means equal, in degree or duration, to the eternal sufferings that we deserve, and which God has threatened to inflict upon us. So that he did in no sense bear the penalty of the law, which we have broken and justly deserve. But supposing he had suffered the very same things, in degree and duration, that the law threatens to us, yet his sufferings could not pay the debt of punishment which we owe to divine justice. For his sufferings cannot take away our desert of sufferings; and if they cannot take away our desert of suffering, they cannot dissolve our obligation to suffer, nor pay our debt of suffering. We deserve to suffer as much as if Christ had not suffered at all. This, we all know, is agreeable to truth. Notwithstanding all the Scripture says concerning Christ's suffering in our stead, and purchasing salvation for us, we still feel that we deserve to suffer the penalty of the law, which we have broken in our own persons, whether we shall suffer it or not. The debt of suffering is not like a pecuniary debt, which one man may pay for another, and dissolve his obligation to pay it. The price or ransom which Christ payed for our redemption has not diminished our ill desert, nor dissolved our obligation to suffer the due reward of our sins. We are not bound by commutative justice, which respects nothing but property; but we are bound by distributive justice, which consists in rewarding virtue and punishing sin. Distributive justice

towards a transgressor cannot be satisfied by a *mult* or fine, but only by personal punishment. Nothing, therefore, that Christ did or suffered here on earth can satisfy God's distributive justice, or pay the debt of suffering which we owe to him. Christ did not literally purchase or buy or ransom or redeem mankind from the punishment which they deserved, and which God had in his law threatened to inflict upon them. None of these expressions are to be understood in any other than a figurative sense, in respect to Christ's atonement. His sufferings and death did not literally pay the debt of punishment which we owe to divine justice. Nor did his obedience pay the debt of obedience which we are bound to pay to the divine law. Though Christ was obedient to all the divine commands, through the whole course of his life, and even in his death, yet he obeyed only for himself, and not in the room of mankind, in order to free them from their obligation to obey God personally and perfectly. There was, indeed, no occasion for his obeying in our room, in order to *merit* salvation for us. Though God cannot forgive sin without an atonement, yet he can reward sincere obedience without an atonement. After God has pardoned penitent believers, through the atonement of Christ, he can accept and reward them for their cordial obedience, without any atonement. Besides, it was absolutely impossible that Christ should literally merit any thing from the hands of his Father. For in order to merit salvation or eternal life for sinners, he must bring his Father under obligation, in point of justice, to bestow eternal life upon them. But it is impossible for one divine person to bring another divine person under obligation, while both are absolutely independent. One created being can lay another created being under obligation, because one created being may be dependent upon another; but since God the Father is absolutely independent, it is utterly impossible that God the Son should bring him under obligation, in point of justice. It is, therefore, contrary to sound reason to suppose that Christ ever merited any thing at the hands of God either by his sufferings or obedience. Hence we are not to understand, by Christ's purchasing salvation for us, that he literally paid either the debt of suffering or the debt of obedience which we owed to God. For his death could not merit our deliverance from future punishment, nor his obedience merit eternal life for us. But,

2. By Christ's purchasing salvation for us, or buying, ransoming, and redeeming us, we are to understand that he made a proper atonement for sin, which rendered it consistent for God to offer salvation to all mankind, and to bestow it upon all penitent, believing, returning sinners. This he did, not by his obedience or righteousness, but by his blood, or his sufferings and death on the cross. He was personally bound to obey the moral, ceremonial, and mediatorial law, to make it appear to the world that

he was the true Messiah, who was promised to our first parents immediately after their apostasy. His obedience made no part of his atonement; it was only a prerequisite to qualify him to make it by his death. Many make a distinction between his *active* and *passive* obedience; but there is no foundation for this distinction in Scripture. His passive obedience had no more tendency to make atonement than his active obedience. All his obedience was precisely of the same nature. It was an expression of love to God and man. But his expression of love to God and man had no atoning influence, nor any tendency to merit either forgiveness or eternal life for sinners. The Scripture never ascribes any part of his atonement to his holy and obedient life, but to his laying down his life, giving his life a ransom, pouring out his soul unto death, and his once offering himself a sacrifice for sin.* His dying the just for the unjust answered the same purpose that God would have answered by executing the penalty of the law upon transgressors themselves. It displayed the same feelings towards sinners that God would have displayed by punishing the whole human race according to their desert. By punishing them according to their desert, God would have manifested his infinite displeasure towards them, and his inflexible disposition to maintain

* His obedience was not designed to make atonement but for two other important purposes. It was necessary that he should be perfectly obedient to every moral, ceremonial, and mediatorial precept, in order to gain the approbation of his Father. Had he failed in obeying one precept of the moral law, God would have been displeased. Had he failed in obeying one precept of the ceremonial law, his Father would have been displeased. Or had he failed in obeying one precept of the mediatorial law, his Father would have been displeased. And had he forfeited the favor of his Father and fallen under legal condemnation, he would have been totally incapable of performing the part of a mediator between God and his rebellious creatures. He would have needed a mediator himself as much as mankind. His perfect obedience, therefore, was necessary on his own account, both as man and mediator.

Christ's obedience was not more adapted than designed to make atonement. Though his obedience to the moral, ceremonial, and mediatorial law, was absolutely perfect, yet no part of his obedience, nor the whole taken together, was in the least degree adapted to make atonement. We might as well suppose that his wearing a seamless coat, or his washing his disciples' feet, could make atonement, as that any other part, or the whole, of his perfect obedience, could make atonement. Christ's perfect obedience had, therefore, no tendency to make the atonement, but only to prepare and qualify him to make it, just as the perfect unblemished form and figure of the paschal lamb qualified that to make a ceremonial atonement. Accordingly, the apostle represents the spotless character of Christ as necessary to qualify him to perform the priest's office, which was to make atonement by offering sacrifices. "For such an high-priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifices first for his own sins and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself." Here the apostle plainly intimates that Christ did not make atonement by his obedience, or his holy life; but by making his soul an offering for sin, or by the single act of his death.

his moral government over all moral beings. Such a display of God's hatred of sin, and disposition to punish it, was absolutely necessary, in order to render it consistent with the perfect rectitude of his nature, to pardon and save penitent sinners from deserved punishment. And nothing could more fully display his vindictive justice in the view of the whole intelligent creation, than his subjecting his Son, whom he loved with the most ardent affection, to the painful and reproachful death of the cross. Through the medium of his vicarious death, God made it manifest that he feels the same hatred of sin and disposition to punish it, when he forgives, as when he punishes, sinners. Though God did not punish sinners by the stripes which he laid on Christ, yet he displayed the same feelings that he would have displayed if he had punished them all personally. Though General Washington would not have punished the man who killed Captain Huddy, if he had put Captain Asgill to death in his room, yet he would have displayed his disposition to punish the man who killed Captain Huddy as clearly as if he had put that murderer to death. God, by subjecting Christ to his agonies in the garden and to his sufferings on the cross, demonstrated to the world that he would by no means clear the guilty, without an atonement for sin. And though the sufferings and death of Christ did not pay the debt of suffering which mankind owed to divine justice, nor dissolve their obligation and desert of punishment; yet Christ by his blood *procured* the pardon and salvation of the church, and laid a foundation for the pardon and salvation of all mankind, so far as an atonement for their sins could lay a foundation for God to make a full display of his pardoning mercy. It was not possible for Christ to merit eternal life for any; but he could procure salvation for all whom his Father should, in his sovereign mercy, bring to repentance and faith, and prepare for the kingdom of heaven. It is, therefore, in this sense only that Christ purchased, bought, ransomed, or redeemed mankind, by his blood. This is what Peter believed and taught Christians to believe, respecting the redemption of Christ. He says, "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, — but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The debt which sinners owe to God is not a pecuniary debt, and therefore cannot be paid with silver or gold. It is a debt of guilt, which the blood of Christ cannot literally pay, and discharge the original debtors from all obligation to pay. But his blood can *atone* for their guilt, and procure pardon or forgiveness at the hands of a merciful God. Now, as the forgiveness of sin, or deliverance from deserved punishment, resembles a discharge from a pecuniary debt, so there is a propriety in the sacred writers' using the terms, purchased, bought, ransomed, and redeemed, in reference to what Christ

did and suffered to deliver mankind from the wrath to come. And these figurative expressions are so proper, pertinent, and intelligible, that there seems to be no ground to understand them in a literal sense, which would imply the gross absurdity that Christ's obedience was our obedience, and Christ's sufferings were our sufferings; so that now our obligation to obedience and our desert of punishment are entirely taken away. But if we understand the terms purchased, bought, ransomed, and redeemed, in a figurative sense, then all that the inspired writers have told us respecting Christ's having obtained eternal redemption for us is plain and intelligible.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. It appears from the whole tenor of this discourse, that Christ did not, either by his obedience or death, merit salvation for us. Both ministers and people, who call themselves orthodox, are very fond of using the phrase, *merits of Christ*, when speaking of his atonement for sin, by which they mean that Christ merited salvation for all for whom he made atonement. But this is neither a scriptural nor proper phrase. It is often designedly or undesignedly used to convey the idea that Christ, by his obedience and sufferings on the cross, paid the debt of suffering and obedience in the room of sinners, so that God is obliged, in point of justice, to release them from eternal sufferings, and to bestow upon them eternal life. This is a false and unscriptural sentiment, and naturally tends to lead men into several other great and dangerous errors.

In particular, it leads some to believe that Christ died and made atonement only for the elect. For if Christ merited salvation for all for whom he died, then God is obliged, in point of justice, to save all for whom he died; and if he died for all, then he is equally bound, in point of justice, to save the whole human race. This is a just and conclusive way of arguing; and therefore many who argue in this way, justly conclude that Christ died only for the elect, because they suppose that only the elect will be saved. Those who call themselves very strict and genuine Calvinists have long maintained that Christ died and merited salvation only for the elect. It must be allowed that they draw a just conclusion from their premises, and have good ground to maintain their darling doctrine of a limited atonement. But how they can reconcile the universal offers in the gospel of salvation to sinners with their notion of particular redemption, it is not easy to see.

Another error to which the phrase, the merits of Christ, leads, is the false notion of imputed guilt and imputed righteousness. Those who hold that Christ literally purchased, bought, ransomed, and redeemed mankind by his obedience and death, suppose that his sufferings are im-

puted to believers for their pardon, and his obedience is imputed to them for their justification, or title to eternal life. This is the same as to suppose that Christ's sufferings and obedience are transferred to believers, and become their sufferings and obedience, which is absurd.

Nor is this all; the phrase, the merits of Christ, leads many professed Calvinists into the gross error of Antinomianism, or the doctrine of an *appropriating faith*. Many who believe that Christ merited salvation for the elect only, suppose that saving faith essentially consists in a person's believing that Christ died and merited salvation for him in particular, and that the merits of his death and obedience have been imputed to him, and have released him, in point of justice, from the wrath to come, and entitled him to eternal life.

The phrase, the merits of Christ, leads some to deny that God offers salvation to all men without distinction or limitation. As they suppose that Christ merited salvation only for the elect, so they naturally suppose that God offers salvation to none but the elect. But the plain truth of fact is, that God does offer salvation to all ages, classes, and characters of men; which proves that Christ did not merit salvation any more for the elect than for the non-elect, nor indeed for any of mankind. If Christ merited salvation for the elect, then it is absurd to suppose that he offers salvation to them upon the terms of repentance and faith; or if Christ merited salvation for all men, it is absurd to suppose that he offers salvation upon any terms whatever; for justice requires him to save all, whether they comply or do not comply with any terms proposed in the gospel. It is not strange, therefore, that the phrase, the merits of Christ, has actually led men to imagine that all mankind will finally be saved. The Scripture plainly declares that Christ did suffer and die for all mankind; and if his sufferings and death did merit salvation for all men, it necessarily follows that all men must be saved. If men would only understand, as they ought, what the Scripture says concerning Christ's purchasing, buying, ransoming, and redeeming mankind by his sufferings and death in a figurative, and not in a literal sense, they would clearly see that there is no foundation in Scripture for the phrase, the merits of Christ, and of course that there is no foundation in Scripture for the doctrine of a limited atonement, or for the doctrine of an appropriating faith, or for the doctrine of universal salvation. The phrase, the merits of Christ, which is such a fruitful source of errors and absurdities, ought to be entirely laid aside.*

* If it was not the *obedience*, but the *blood* of Christ, that made atonement for sin, then nothing Christ did or said or suffered previous to his death, or his last suffering on the cross, was of a propitiatory, satisfactory, or atoning nature. Many divines have considered the whole life of Christ, from his birth to his death, as constituting the

2. If what Christ did and suffered for sinners did not merit salvation for them, then the doctrine of justification through faith in Christ is perfectly consistent with full atonement for sin. Some imagine that the free grace of God, in converting and pardoning sinners, cannot be reconciled with the full atonement which Christ has made to divine justice, by his vicarious sufferings on the cross. But this supposed difficulty of reconciling these two doctrines arises entirely from a misapprehension of the real nature and design of Christ's atonement. The nature and design of Christ's atonement were merely to display the vindictive justice of God, and not to pay the debt of suffering which sinners had incurred by their transgressions of his holy law. Consequently, God displays the same free and sovereign grace in the conversion and salvation of sinners through the atonement of Christ, as if no atonement for sin had ever been made. So Paul thought and said in his epistle to the Romans. "Being justified freely by *his grace, through the redemption* that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in *his blood*, to declare *his righteousness*," or vindictive justice, "for the remission of sins — to declare, I say, at this time *his righteousness*; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in *Jesus*." He conveys the same sentiment in similar language in his epistle to the Ephesians. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus." In these passages, the apostle expressly declares that God displays his grace, even the exceeding riches of his grace, in the conversion and justification of sinners, through the blood or atonement of Christ; which amounts to saying that the free grace of God in the pardon of sin is perfectly consistent with a full atonement for it.

two parts of his atonement, or his *active* and *passive* obedience, his *satisfaction* to divine justice, and his *meriting* salvation for believers. But there appears no ground in Scripture for the distinction between the *satisfaction* of Christ and the *merits* of Christ. It was impossible that he should merit from God, either as a man or as mediator, either by his obedience or by his suffering. The truth is, his *obedience* only prepared him to make atonement; his *blood* made it, and atonement did neither *satisfy* nor *merit*. It only rendered it consistent for God to show mercy, to be just and the justifier of all who believe.

If Christ made atonement by his blood, and not by his obedience, then that for which he was rewarded was not that for which sinners are pardoned. They are pardoned on account of his death, but he was rewarded for his life or his obedience, even unto death. This obedience was acceptable to God, but was not the atonement.

3. Since Christ's obedience was necessary to qualify him to make atonement for sin, we may see why the sacred writers sometimes represent his atonement by his obedience, and sometimes by his death, his blood, his sacrifice, or his sufferings. His obedience was inseparably connected with his death. Hence the apostle said to the Philippians, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Wherefore he says again, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." And by the prophet, Christ is called "the Lord our righteousness." Though the inspired writers do not always make a distinction between the obedience and sufferings of Christ, yet they let us know that this distinction is always to be understood, by their so often ascribing his atonement to his death, his blood, his sacrifice, or once offering up himself as a lamb without blemish and without spot, for all. The apostle has clearly shown that Christ made atonement for all mankind, not by his obedience, but by his blood, his suffering, his death on the cross.

4. It appears from what Christ did and suffered to make atonement for sin, that God can consistently forgive or justify all penitent believers, entirely on Christ's account; but that he cannot consistently reward them for their sincere obedience on any other than their own account. Christ suffered and died in the room of sinners, in order to make atonement for their sins, and thereby lay a proper foundation for God to exercise pardoning mercy towards all who repent, and believe the gospel. But he did not obey in the room of sinners, in order that God might consistently reward them for their obedience, after they were pardoned or justified through the atonement of Christ. Though God cannot consistently *forgive sin*, yet he can consistently *reward virtue*, without an atonement. All the sincere obedience and good works of believers deserve the divine approbation and gracious reward, solely on account of their intrinsic and moral excellence. True holiness in saints is as really amiable and praiseworthy as is true holiness in angels, or as true holiness in Adam was before he sinned. God may therefore as consistently reward all true believers for their holiness on their own account, as he could have rewarded Adam for his holiness if he had never transgressed, or as he can reward angels for all their services in this world, on their own account, or without an atonement. There is a wide difference between rewarding goodness and pardoning mercy. The inspired writers clearly and repeatedly point out this distinction. They expressly declare that believers are pardoned or justified by free, sovereign grace, through the

redemption or atonement of Christ, and that they are rewarded according to their obedience or good works. Those who have clear and just views of the nature and necessity of Christ's atonement, can easily see the propriety and consistency of God's pardoning believers solely on Christ's account, and his rewarding them solely on their own account.

5. Since Christ has done and suffered so much to obtain eternal salvation for believers, they cannot do too much for him. He loved them before they loved him. He died for them while they were dead in trespasses and sins. He sent his Holy Spirit to convince and convert them, and to bring them out of darkness into marvellous light. What he has done and suffered to deliver them from the condemnation of the law, the power and dominion of sin, and to restore them to the forfeited favor of God, lays them under the tenderest and strongest obligation to consecrate themselves wholly to his service. Hence the apostle, speaking in the name of believers, says, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them." Christ has much for his redeemed ones to do for him, while he is carrying on his great and gracious design in the work of redeeming love in this rebellious world. He employed saints, patriarchs, and prophets, in former ages, as instruments of building up his spiritual kingdom; and in later ages he has employed apostles, preachers, and all his real friends, as instruments of promoting the great and good cause which lies nearest to his heart. These his redeemed and purchased servants ought to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of their Redeemer, knowing that their labor shall not be in vain nor unrewarded. It is especially the duty and privilege of all the ministers of the gospel to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ, whom he hath purchased with his own blood.

Finally, let all sinners, of every age, character, and condition, be entreated to come to Christ for salvation. He has made complete atonement for you, and removed an obstacle out of your way, which neither you nor any created being could have removed. He sincerely invites you to come to him, weary and heavy laden and self condemned, and promises to give you pardon and peace and rest. The kingdom of heaven is come nigh to you, and life and death are set before you. If you choose life through him who has died for you, you shall live and reign with him for ever; but if you choose death, you will never see life, but the wrath of God will abide upon you, both in this world and in the world to come. You must love or hate God; you must love or hate his law; you must love or hate holiness; you must love or hate heaven; you must choose, or refuse to be holy and happy for ever; and your choice must fix your eternal state.

AN
HUMBLE ATTEMPT
TO
RECONCILE THE DIFFERENCES OF CHRISTIANS
RESPECTING
THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.
BY
EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D.D.

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P R E F A C E .

IF there is a subject within the whole range of thought which calls for the application of our best powers in a course (I do not say of metaphysical, but) of close and patient investigation, it is the work of redemption. This stupendous plan gives full scope to the higher orders of intellect. "Which things the angels desire to look into." I know not how often, in tracing the following pages, these words have rushed upon my mind with new and deeper reasons for that angelic research. So many are the relations which this great work involves, so complicated and various its influences, so connected it is with some of the abstrusest questions relative to the nature and powers of man, that the more it is studied the less will be the wonder that the best instructed angel is still bending forward with prying scrutiny to look into these things.

And shall the children of a day think that they have learned enough on this amazing subject, when they have gathered a few scraps of knowledge, — half a dozen general notions respecting the mission and work of Christ, — without any definite idea of the end of his atonement, or the purpose which his righteousness was to answer in the government of God? How many, alas! calculate thus, and content themselves with knowledge scarcely sufficient to support a general faith. This is the besetting sin and danger of an age of business. Thus men will not reason when they see the Son of God in the clouds of heaven, and find themselves at his bar. These Christians by rote! how much of the real glory of the gospel do they lose; how much of its amazing views; how much of its sublime consolations; how much of its sanctifying power! And to what hazard do they put their eternal interests! How are they to know, with such a twilight vision, that it is the real gospel they believe? that it is the very Christ of God which fills their eye? How, unless the clear and distinguishing glory of Messiah falls upon their view, are their selfish hearts to be tested? Many, it is feared, go down to death from our com-

munion tables, for want of having their hearts revealed and their hopes destroyed by the discriminating light of those rays which beam from the face of Jesus Christ.

It is time that these indolent and contracted calculations were broken up. It is time that men discovered that the "great mystery of godliness" presents a subject for more than general and loose reflections; that if there is any use for their immortal powers, it is on this vast and unfathomable wonder of redemption.

And now if any are unwilling to harness themselves for a conflict with indolence, and to bring their minds up to patient and elevated thought, let them close the book here. But if they have entered into the feelings of heaven, and caught a desire to search into a subject which a thousand ages of study will not exhaust, let them offer an humble prayer and then begin.

INTRODUCTION.

THE author of the following sheets has long believed that the controversy existing among Calvinists on the extent of the atonement is little more than a dispute about words, and might be terminated in a manner satisfactory to both parties by kind and candid explanations. He certainly has no pretensions to any uncommon skill or influence to accomplish so desirable an end; but grieved to find, on his return from a conflict with men of a far different spirit, a division among brethren who are natural allies, and ought to be united in the same mind and judgment, he was constrained to offer his thoughts, in humble hopes of persuading the more candid on both sides that no serious difference exists between them.

In one principle both parties are agreed; that our instructions on this subject are to be drawn from the Scriptures alone, and not from bold and presumptuous speculations. Reason has only to kneel and ask what the Oracle says. Her province is to ascertain the meaning of the sacred page by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and in one description of cases (but not without great caution and humility), with common sense. The test of common sense is to be applied only to distinguish between the figurative and literal meaning of texts which were obviously intended to be subjected to such a scrutiny; as, for instance, those which speak of God's eyes and hands and feet, of his repenting, of his fury's coming up in his face, and the like. The right of applying common sense in this description of cases is a great Protestant principle, asserted by all the Reformed Churches in their disputes with the Romanists about transubstantiation. When our Saviour says, "This is my body," and, "This is my blood," Protestants affirm that his language is figurative, because a literal construction would be an outrage to common sense. In like manner when Christ and believers are said to be one, common sense refuses actually to identify them, and pronounces the language

figurative; for manifestly Christ is not literally one with believers any more than he is with the bread and wine. So when it is said that he was made "sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," common sense decides that sin and righteousness are both used in a figurative sense; for Christ was not literally sin, but was only treated as a sinner; and we are not literally righteousness, but are only treated as righteous. 2 Cor. 5: 21.*

A considerable part of the dispute has arisen from a failure thus to distinguish between the figurative and literal meaning of texts. But there are two other points of difference of still greater influence, one respecting the nature, the other the objects, of the atonement.

One respects the nature. We mean by atonement nothing more than that which is the ground of release from the curse, and we separate it entirely from the merit of Christ, or his claim to a reward. Our brethren comprehend under the name, not only what we understand by expiation, but merit also, with all its claim. And if they could see the propriety of limiting the term as we do, few of them would deny our conclusions. In their mouth the word is always coextensive with ransom (*λυτρον*), the price of redemption (*λυτρωσις*); and the question which they raise is about particular redemption, on which there really is no dispute; we believing as fully as they do that redemption, in the higher and more perfect sense, was accomplished only for the elect. It is to be noticed that ransom, and words of that nature, are used in two senses in the New Testament: first, for the blood of Christ laid down for a moral agent, to deliver him from death if he on his part will accept the offer. This I call the lower ransom, and it is exactly what we mean by the atonement. Secondly, for expiation and merit united. A ransom has two influences; it supports the claim of the Redeemer, and it is that out of respect to which the holder of the captives lets them go. According to this, the ransom of Christ includes his merit, which claimed the release of the captives as his reward, and his atonement, out of respect to which, as the honor of the law was concerned, the Father consented to their discharge. This I call the *higher ransom*, and its absolute and unfailing influence depends on the claim of merit to its

* The first clause cannot be translated, "hath made him to be a sin-offering," for that would destroy the antithesis. He was made sin just as we are made righteousness. Both words are figuratively used, but from their opposition to each other neither can be changed without destroying the point of the sentence. Besides, the former word is restricted by being repeated with a literal meaning; "who knew no sin." The order of the words in the original is this: "For him who knew no *αμαρτιαν*, for us he hath made *αμαρτιαν*." *Αμαρτιαν* must not be rendered *sin* in one place and a *sin-offering* in another in the same clause of a sentence.

stipulated recompense. This was not offered for all; for none of us will say that Christ so purchased the whole race by the merit of his obedience, that he could claim them all as his promised reward.

The second point respects the objects of the atonement. We consider the satisfaction as made exclusively for moral agents; our brethren speak of it as if it was made for mere passive subjects of regenerating influence, and in their reasonings they overlook moral agents. In which character men were really contemplated in the provision, is indeed the question on which the controversy chiefly hinges. If it was made for moral agents, it might be made for those who were never to be regenerated; if made for passive receivers of sanctifying impressions, it was made only for those who are ultimately new-born. If made for the passive, it must be absolute; and if absolute, the event shows that it was not made for all: if made for moral agents, it must be conditional; and if conditional, it could not be limited to a part.

These three points comprehend the whole ground of the dispute. If the parties can discriminate with the same eyes between figurative and literal language, and especially if they can agree to separate atonement from merit, and can be of one mind respecting the character in which men were contemplated in the provision; there will no longer be any difference even in words, and thus this unhappy division will be healed.

PART I.

NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

ATONEMENT MERELY THE GROUND OF RELEASE FROM THE CURSE.

ATONEMENT is a word wholly derived from the Old Testament, and is not found in the New except once by mistake, where the Greek term ought to have been rendered reconciliation. Rom. 5: 11. In all other instances throughout the Bible it is a translation from the Hebrew כפר. By this, then, its meaning must be limited. No Greek word of the New Testament can be allowed to be parallel with it that differs from כפר in the least shade, and no examination of other terms can throw any light on this question of logomachy. כפר is the only standard by which the meaning of the English word must be controlled and fixed.

Now it is agreed that כפר signified a covering, because the thing denoted was a cover for sin. It was never used, I believe, in a single instance (by whatever word translated), to express any other idea, except when applied to things wholly remote from the present subject. It never glanced at any bearing on our positive reward. A fair specimen of its use may be seen in the following passages. "Moses said unto the people, ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." "I have sworn unto the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged [covered] with sacrifice nor offering for ever." "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin." "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death, but a wise man will pacify it." "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me." Gen. 32: 20. Ex. 32: 30. 1 Sam. 3: 14. Prov. 16: 14. Is. 27: 9. The typical expiations denoted by the word were generally made by the חטאת or sin-offering, and sometimes by the זבח or tres-

pass-offering, two words derived from roots signifying a sin and a trespass, and the former root sometimes the act of cleansing by a sin-offering. Ezek. 43 : 22, 23.

And now, to follow these shadows into the gospel dispensation, the Hebrew words which denoted the sin and trespass-offering are translated by the LXX (the former repeatedly, Ezek. 43 : 22, 23. 44 : 27. 45 : 18, 19, the latter once, Amos 8 : 14) ; ἱλασμος (and its derivative ἐξιλασμος), the very word by which John twice designates the great propitiatory sacrifice, 1 John 2 : 2. 4 : 10, offered by our High-Priest "to atone (ἱλασκεσθαι), for the sins of the people." Heb. 2 : 17. The atonement of the New Testament, then, was made by "an offering for sin," Is. 53 : 10, and by a "propitiation for our sins." That which was accomplished by the great sin-offering answers exactly to the כפר of the Old Testament, and is that cover for sin which we call the atonement.

We have, therefore, no authority to call any part of Christ's influence an atonement but that which constituted the cover for sin. Whatever other influence he had must be distinguished by a different name. Other influences he certainly had. Other influences are even ascribed to his death. But his death comprehended not only an atoning sacrifice, but the highest merit of obedience. To his blood our justification is once ascribed, Rom. 5 : 9 ; but justification in that passage means only pardon, as it does also in another place, Acts 13 : 39. Sometimes the sacred writers, taking it for granted that more is known of Christ than that he atoned, pass in their rapid course from his expiation to the life which comes through him, without stopping to notice any intervening influence. But whatever is ascribed to his death, whatever to his blood, whatever to him as the *ἱλαστήριον* or mercy-seat, Rom. 3 : 25, 26 ; or as having opened a way to the mercy-seat by the rending of the vail of his flesh, Heb. 10 : 19, 20 ; still the meaning of כפר confines the atonement to the cover for sin.

One might suppose that the Synod of Dort, that great representative of the Calvinistic world, had the same view. They everywhere speak of the atonement as made for sin, and talk of its sufficiency (*ad omnia peccata expianda*, as their common phrase is) to expiate for the sins of the whole world. And this is the uniform acceptance of the word in common conversation, which shows the general impression as to its original meaning. To atone, in every one's mouth, is to make reparation for an injury or amends for an offence.

Now to cover sin is a figurative expression, and plainly means no more than that sin is so far hid from view that it is not to be punished. Atonement, then, is merely that which was adapted to prevent punishment, or that which came in the room of punishment and laid a foundation for

our discharge from every part of the curse. It reached no further, and had no bearing on our positive reward. This was left to another influence, hereafter to be considered.

The curse of the law consisted of two parts, abandonment to depravity, and positive misery. That the former was included requires some proof. The law, I suppose, had doomed mankind, I do not say to sin (for to punish sin with sin, or judicially to doom agents to act, is a thing unknown), but to the everlasting loss of the sanctifying agency of God. If there is such a thing as leaving men to judicial blindness; if in anger God abandons sinners "unto their own heart's lust," to walk "in their own counsels," saying, "my Spirit shall not always strive with man;" if for their iniquities he gives "them over to a reprobate mind," saying, "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed;" Gen. 6: 3. Ps. 81: 12. Is. 6: 9-12. Rom. 1: 24-32; then there is such a thing as abandoning sinners by way of punishment. And how, I ask, without giving them up to tormenting passions, could there be such a hell as the divine law contemplates? And why should it be thought more inconsistent to withhold the Spirit by way of punishment, than to bestow it (as we shall see that it is bestowed) by way of reward? It greatly supports this idea that the mission of the Spirit was not obtained for a sinful world, but by the death of a Mediator. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." And when he "ascended on high," among other "gifts" "received for men" was this, "that the Lord God might dwell among them;" and within ten days he sent the blessing forth. Ps. 68: 18. John 16: 7. Acts ii.

These were the two parts of the penalty of the law, and one could no more be set aside without an atonement than the other. But the cover for sin removed or rendered removable every part of the curse which sin had incurred. That which came in the room of our whole punishment, took away the curse of abandonment, and rendered sin pardonable on the supposition of faith, and when accepted by the Father, made remission sure to believers. Further it could not go, and had nothing to do with our positive reward.*

* Some have thought that the cover for sin must be extended so far as to include a foundation for our reward, by cancelling, not only the *debitum pene* (debt of punishment), but the *debitum negligentiae* (debt of negligence). But negligence, after taking from it every thing which deserves punishment, is not sin, but a mere defect, and therefore is not to be remedied by the cover for sin. It is said that sin disabled us from gaining a legal title to a reward, and a cover for sin is not complete till it has provided for

When I say that the curse of abandonment was removed, I do not mean that the law ceased to pronounce the sentence on men. The law never ceases to pronounce any part of its sentence against those who have once sinned, even after they are pardoned. But what I mean is, that it was as consistent with the honor of the law to give the Spirit to men as though the curse of abandonment had not been pronounced or incurred. It was not, indeed, consistent with the highest honor of the law to give the Spirit to men till the merit of Christ was introduced to make the gift a legal reward to him. But it was as consistent as though the curse had not been pronounced. The curse, therefore, no longer stood in the way. It was as consistent as though there had been no sin. But after sin was covered, so far as it stood related to this part of the curse, there still re-

restoring the title by grace. But it was not sin that produced the disability which remains after the debt of punishment is cancelled. All sin is then covered ; but even then we have not a perfect righteousness from the beginning to show, and it is too late to produce one. This is the only difficulty. But that omission of obedience, you say, was sin, and defrauded God of his rights, and drew down a sentence of disfranchisement, cutting us off from ever gaining a reward. The omission was indeed sin, because it was disobedience. The whole sin lay in the disobedience, "for sin is the transgression of the law." But there was something more in the omission than sin, there was a defect ; there was something more in it than disobedience, there was the want of obedience. As it stood related to the rights and demands of God, it was positive injury and disobedience ; as it stood related to the promise, it was a mere failure to produce that positive good to which the promise was made. The reward was promised, not to the absence of sin, but to positive obedience ; and the mere want of that positive thing, without the presence of sin, is enough to vitiate our title, and remains a defect after all sin, even the sin of negligence, is covered. On the other hand, all that was threatened to sin was punishment, not the loss of reward ; that followed the mere want of obedience, not viewed as disobedience, but as the bare absence of good. There was no need of a sentence of disfranchisement to cut us off from reward. The mere failure to render that to which the promise was made, without such a sentence, was enough to exclude us. If I promise a man a certain reward for a day's work, and he comes at noon, there is no need of a punitive sentence to vitiate his title to the stipulated recompense. His mere failure cuts him off without involving the idea of punishment. You say the cases are not parallel, because his failure violated no obligation. But so far as our omission violated obligation, it was sin, it was disobedience, and stands related, not to the loss of reward, but to positive punishment. In that omission there are two things, a sin and a defect, — the presence of that which entitles to punishment, and the absence of that which entitles to reward ; and when all the sin of the omission is covered, there still remains a defect which prevents our title to a recompense. When the *debitum pene* is cancelled all the sin of the omission is covered, and the *debitum negligentiae* which remains must be discharged by another influence. That other influence is the merit of Christ's obedience, and the way in which it procured our positive good was by first obtaining it as a legal reward to himself. As certainly, then, as we spread the cover for sin over the *debitum negligentiae*, and make it the foundation of our reward, we put merit, and not merely the testimony of obedience, into the atonement.

mained a defect of positive righteousness. And it was the principle of Eden, as will appear in another place, not to grant the Spirit, after man had had an opportunity to act, but in approbation of a righteousness perfect for the time the subject had been in existence, and not to grant it as a covenanted reward, but out of respect to a finished righteousness. After sin was covered, the Spirit could not be granted, according to that original principle, but out of respect to the perfect righteousness of Christ. The cover for sin was not, therefore, enough to open the way for the mission of the Spirit. All that it could do was to remove the obstruction which sin had raised, or that which lay in the curse of abandonment, but not that which was occasioned by the defect. This is what I mean by removing the curse of abandonment.

This part of the curse was removed without the agency of man as a prerequisite. That is, the obstruction which sin had raised to the grant of regenerating influence to passive receivers was taken away without reference to the conduct of the same creatures as agents. No such prerequisite could be required without preventing the removal altogether, because the curse must be taken away, and regenerating influence bestowed, before men would be holy. And in the nature of things such a prerequisite could not be necessary. After such a death to support the penalty of the law, the influence of the penalty could not be weakened by any favor shown to men, unless it spread a shield over irreclaimable wickedness. An influence to turn them from wickedness could not abate the authority of the penalty. The atonement, therefore, rendered it consistent with the honor of the law, so far as the influence of the penalty was concerned, to bestow regenerating grace on men, without any previous faith or repentance. And this is what I mean by removing the curse of abandonment.

It was not so with the other part of the penalty. This could not be removed without the intervention of human agency. For to have applied actual remission to those who should persist in rebellion, and thus to have cast the shield of impunity over stubborn transgressors, would have ruined the law and defeated the very end of the atonement. Pardon, then, could not be dispensed (to those who hear and understand the Gospel), without the existence of faith; and no atonement could absolutely procure pardon which did not as absolutely procure the gift of faith. Whether the atonement contained all that influence which insured actual reconciliation, depends therefore on the single question, whether by its own unaided power it secured the gift of faith. That some influence of Christ secured this gift to the elect we admit, and earnestly contend; but was it the atonement?

This is not the place to settle a question of this sort, or to say any

more about it than what is suggested by the name. The cover for sin could only prevent the evil which sin deserved, but could not secure positive good, unless the mere absence of sin without positive righteousness could secure good. How, then, could it obtain the Spirit? But you say, it could not cover sin without actual pardon, and it could not secure pardon without obtaining the gift of faith. True; nor does the name determine whether it is the actual cover of sin, or only a cover for sin. A cover for a cask is still called by that name though it is not put on, and has an actual and complete existence without being used. There may be a cover for a moral agent, which, at the risk of an awful responsibility, he still rejects.

This leads me to remark, that if the atonement was a provision for moral agents, it is wrong to say that it was made only for believers. Though Christ is not a mercy-seat (*ἱλαστήριον*), but “through faith in his blood,” Rom. 3: 25 (cannot otherwise be propitious, or render God propitious, to those who approach him), and though the atonement was to be applied only to believers; yet as moral agents have an existence independent of their character, so far as it was a provision for such, it was prepared for them while yet in their sins. In this sense it might be made for “the ungodly,” for those who are neither “righteous” nor “good,” but “sinners” and “enemies.” Rom. 5: 6–10.

One point is fixed: the cover for sin could reach no further than the curse which sin had incurred, and could extend no influence to our positive reward, unless reward follows the mere absence of sin without positive righteousness. It is this limitation of the atonement, everywhere conspicuous in the Scriptures, which has given rise to the opinion that the whole influence of Christ is confined to pardon. With that thought I have no communion, and hope to show, in the Appendix, that his merit is the ground of all our positive happiness; but in the body of the work I have nothing to do with any thing but the cover for sin.

CHAPTER II.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ATONEMENT UPON DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

WHAT end did the death of Christ answer as an atoning sacrifice? It opened the way for the pardon of believers. But why could not believers have been pardoned without it? How did it open the way? I am not answered by being told that it expressed the wisdom and benevolence of

God. Until I discover some important end answered by it, I can see no wisdom or benevolence in it, but something very much like a waste of human life. What was that end? Do you tell me that the eternal principles of justice required that sin should be punished? But sin was not punished; for innocence suffered and sin escaped. What end was answered by laying this affliction on the innocent? Precisely the same as respects the support of law, that would have been answered by our punishment. The atonement, we have seen, was a cover for sin, — was adapted so to bury sin from view that it should not be punished. It therefore came exactly in the room of punishment, and ought to answer the same end. When it had done that, it had removed the necessity of punishment, and constituted a complete cover for sin. It might answer that purpose more fully, but we have no right to ascribe to it any other end.

What end, then, does punishment answer? The same that was aimed at in attaching the penalty to the law, only in a more intense degree. And what was that? The support of the authority of the law. Without a penalty the law is nothing more than a summary of advice, which every one is at liberty to regard or neglect as he pleases. Did the penalty show God's attachment to the precept? But how? By being set to guard the precept, or to give authority to the law. In this way alone it revealed any thing of God. Whatever of him was shown by bringing forward a sanction to support the authority of a holy and benevolent law, and nothing more, was disclosed by the penalty. The sole end of the penalty, then, was to support the authority of the law, and to discover as much of God as such an expedient for such a purpose could reveal. The support of law, therefore, comprehended all other ends, and may be put for the whole. The same end is answered by the execution of the penalty, only in a higher degree. Without the execution it would have been the same as though no penalty had existed. The law would have lost its authority; the reins would have been thrown upon the neck of every passion; anarchy, discord, and misery would have ravaged the abodes of being; and all the happiness which is bottomed on holy order, and all the discoveries of God which are made in a holy and vigorous moral government, would have been lost. This unbounded mischief would have followed a prostration of the authority of the law; that prostration would have followed a proclamation of impunity to transgression; and this proclamation would have been implied in a neglect to execute the penalty. The only way to prevent this infinite mischief was to proclaim and prove that transgressors should be punished. In this single declaration and proof the whole antidote lay. For whatever else of God was proved, if it did not go to establish this, it could not uphold the au-

thority of the law. If it proved that he was holy or just or good or true or wise, or attached to his precept, or all these together, it could not support the authority of the law any further than it gave evidence that transgressors should be punished. Nothing of God could be expressed by punishment but what is contained in the single proposition that he does and will support his righteous law by punishing transgressors. Did it express his holiness, justice, benevolence, and wisdom? But how? By showing his determination to uphold the authority of a righteous law by punishing sin. Besides furnishing motives to obedience, it was intended to set him forth as the object of confidence, complacency, joy, and praise. But how? By showing his inflexible purpose to maintain his holy and benevolent law by adequate punishments. The ultimate end of government, as of all other things, was to exhibit the glory of God, so needful to the happiness of his kingdom, and to secure to him that treatment which was his due, and in which the blessedness of creatures was involved. This was the ultimate end of punishment. But before it could answer this end it must accomplish an immediate purpose, subservient to government and the dominion of holiness. Before it could express the holiness, justice, benevolence, or wisdom of God, or hold him up as an object of confidence, complacency, joy, or praise, it must be fitted to answer an important end, subservient to the reign of holy principles. What was that end? The support of the authority of a righteous law by discovering a fixed resolution to punish transgressors. This, then, was the immediate and proper end of punishment. In that punishment I care not how much of God you suppose to be revealed,—how much attachment to his law, how much hatred of sin, how much justice, or even truth; you may add more or less to these things, but the whole is expressed in the single proposition that he will support his righteous law by punishing sin. To give proof that he will punish is certainly disclosing every thing of God which punishment can reveal. The end of punishment, then, in any given instance, besides pronouncing the subject personally ill-deserving, and being an exercise of justice in that particular case, is merely to uphold the authority of the law by revealing God's determination to punish transgression.

Precisely the same was the end of that which came in the room of punishment and answered its identical purpose. In whatever the atonement consisted, it expressed all that punishment would have expressed, except that the sufferer was personally a sinner; and was all that punishment would have been except a literal execution of justice. This it could not be. Justice never required the personally innocent to suffer, but the personally guilty; and no plan of substitution or representation, and nothing but a personal identity between Christ and the sinner, rendering

him personally a transgressor, could make out an act of literal justice in the infliction of sufferings on him. Equally certain it is, that the sufferings did not pronounce him personally a sinner. These two uses of punishment being separated from the atonement, the only end remaining is, the support of the law by showing God's determination to execute its penalty on transgressors. This was its precise and only end. This answered, it became an expression of amazing wisdom, benevolence, and mercy, and laid a foundation for the most luminous display of all the divine perfections in the application and progress of redemption. But before it could do this, it must answer an end properly its own, which, therefore, is to be considered the immediate and proper end of the atonement; and that was what has already been stated. It made an impression on the universe, stronger than would have been made by the destruction of all Adam's race, that God was determined, notwithstanding his mercy to men, to support the authority of his law by executing its penalty on transgressors. How much was implied in this declaration, I am not concerned to inquire;—how far it “condemned sin in the flesh,” how far it pronounced transgression to be as hell-deserving as the law had said, how far it asserted the rectitude of the divine government, and took the part of the Father against the sins of the world. If it answered any or all of these ends, as it undoubtedly did, it was by giving the Father an opportunity to prove to the universe that he would execute his law on future transgressors. It expressed every thing (except that the Sufferer was personally a sinner) that could have been expressed by punishment, or that could be implied in a determination to punish the future transgressors of a holy law. In the expression of punishment, or a determination to punish, you may comprehend as much as you please; the same was expressed by the atonement. Say that punishment, or a determination to punish, proves that God is just, and attached to his law, and believes it good, and is like it himself, and hates sin, and, if you please, is a Being of truth; then all these were expressed in that single declaration of the atonement, that he would punish sin. Every thing of God which punishment could reveal, was disclosed by an atonement which proved that he would punish. Every end which punishment could answer (except a literal execution of justice, and an implication of the moral turpitude of the Sufferer), was accomplished by an atonement which proved that God would punish. The whole use, then, of an atonement which was to answer the exact purpose of punishment, was to show that God was determined to support his holy law by punishing sin.

Let me illustrate the operation of this august measure by the following case. The bank of England is essential to the prosperity of the nation. The law against forgery, with its penalty of death, is essential to the

existence of the bank. Ten noblemen are found counterfeiting the notes of that institution. What is to be done? If the law is not executed, every one will conclude that he may counterfeit with impunity, and the bank and the nation are lost. They must die. In this state of things, the prince of Wales comes forward and offers to die in their stead. The offer is accepted, and on a conspicuous hill, in full view of the assembled nation, he is executed. What impression is made on the multitude? Do they now conclude that people may counterfeit with impunity, because they see the penitent noblemen pardoned? No; they are more deeply impressed with the inflexible resolution of government to punish forgery, than though half a nation of counterfeiters had died. This is the point gained. The law is raised to the highest pitch of authority by the strongest possible proof that its penalty will in future be executed.

In giving this proof, for such a purpose and at such a price, the government showed their attachment to the law, their abhorrence of forgery, and their determination to be just in the future infliction of punishment, though justice in that instance did not literally take its course. But they showed these things through no other medium than a fixed resolution, at all events, to execute the penalty of the law. In the discovery of this single purpose, the whole expression was involved.

CHAPTER III.

THE MATTER OF ATONEMENT.

IN examining this subject, it is necessary to keep immovably before the eye the end which an atonement was intended to answer in the government of God. It was the same that would have been answered by punishment. And what was that? To furnish practical proof that God would support the authority of his law by executing its penalty on transgressors. When that proof was given, and the end of punishment was thus answered, the Protector of the law was satisfied. The thing which produced that satisfaction was the atonement or cover for sin. When I ask after the matter of the atonement, I ask what that thing was. What was that by which the Protector of the law furnished the same practical proof of his resolution to execute the penalty, that he would have given by punishment itself? My general answer is, it was humiliation imposed, and sufferings inflicted, by his own authority and

hand on his beloved Son. What could so naturally show that God would inflict evil for sin, as the actual infliction of evil on account of sin? as the tokens of wrath discharged against the Son of his love standing avowedly in the place of sinners?

The law, as it stood related to transgressors, had two parts, precept and penalty. As it stood related to those who had not sinned, it had also a reward for obedience, and, I add, for nothing but obedience. Accordingly, the task devolved on him who took the sinner's place, consisted of two parts; obedience, which stood related to the precept, and sufferings, which came in the room of the penalty. By obedience also, and nothing but obedience, he obtained a reward in which his people were to share. In accordance with all this, our salvation consists of two parts; a release from the penalty, and a participation of the positive good involved in Christ's reward. Here, then, in one line were the penalty of the law, the sufferings of Christ which came in its room, and our release from the penalty as the consequence. Here, also, in another line were the precept of the law with the reward of obedience annexed, the obedience of Christ with the reward which followed, and our admission to the positive good involved in that reward. All this appears plain and natural. The sufferings and obedience of Christ, two parts inseparable in fact but separable in influence, constituted one whole. That was followed by another whole, to wit our salvation, consisting of two parts, equally inseparable in fact, but separable in contemplation; namely, deliverance from hell, and elevation to heaven. Now, what I assert is, that the appropriate influence of one part of the first whole stood related to one part of the second whole, and that the appropriate influence of the other part of the first whole stood related to the other part of the second whole; in plain language, that the sufferings of Christ came in the room of our sufferings, and his merit in the room of our merit; that by one he lifted us from hell to earth, by the other he raised us from earth to heaven.

There is a distinction to be set up here between the matter of atonement and the making of atonement. The matter of atonement was the thing which satisfied, the making of atonement was the presenting of that thing. When Aaron offered an expiating victim he was said to make atonement, though the atoning power did not lie in Aaron's arm, but in the bleeding lamb; and though Aaron's action could have no other effect than to present the victim to God according to his appointment, in other words, to bring it, with whatever power it had, into the necessary relation to God. According to the same form of expression, the Priest of the New Testament is said "to atone for the sins of the people," and "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Heb. 2: 17. 9: 26. The same form of expression is used whenever we speak of Christ's making atonement. And it is common also in other matters. It is medicine, and not the act of the physician, which works the cure. But it must be administered, and administered in a right way. And when this is done we commonly say, the physician healed the patient. So it was the sufferings of Christ, and not his action, which satisfied; but they must be presented by the Priest, and presented in a right way, that is, unmixed with any disobedience in his life; and when all this is done we very properly say that Christ made atonement; not only ascribing to him the effect of his sufferings, but referring to his act in presenting them. The obedience of Christ was necessary to atonement in the two following respects.

1. To render him, in typical language, a Lamb without blemish. In plain language, his general obedience (and of course his general subjection to law), was necessary to set him forth as the beloved Son, and thus to render his sufferings sufficiently expressive of God's inflexible resolution to punish sin. He must be infinitely dear to God to give his sufferings this full expression. He must be the Son, and the well-beloved Son, to be thus dear. He must be subject and obedient during his probation, to be, in the eyes both of God and man, the well-beloved Son; for obedience constituted as essential a part of the filial relation during his minority, as inheritance does since he has come of age. There being but one Lawgiver, and essentially but one law, this subjection of the Son placed him completely under the law given to other creatures. And when he was under law, he was not only bound by the precept, but liable to the penalty, in case of disobedience. And now his general obedience became still more necessary to qualify him to make atonement, as in case of disobedience, so far from being able to expiate for the sins of others, he must have suffered for his own. Obedience, in this view, went merely to qualify his sufferings.

2. The act of the Priest in presenting the Victim must necessarily be an act of obedience. The Father must command him to die, or the stroke would not have come from his own hand.* But the infliction must be made by the very Magistrate who is thereby to show that he will punish others. At his command the Victim must be bound, at his word the stroke must be given, and under his authority and hand the Substitute must die. But in no way could the stroke be inflicted by divine authority, but either by being obediently submitted to, or by

* Compulsion, before the Son was subject to law, would neither have been possible nor just. And after he became subject, with a perfect willingness to die, there was no way to control him which was necessary, or proper, or suited to display him as the obedient Son, but through the medium of his will.

being forced by main strength upon one struggling against the authority ; in which latter case the sufferings would have been personally deserved, and could no more have atoned than the pains of the damned. The necessity of the command appears in another point of view. The satisfaction must be rendered to One holding the authority of the Godhead, and of course by One not on the throne, and therefore, as the throne of God must reign over all beneath it, by One under law ; and when he was under law he had no right to die uncommanded. A mere consent of the Father in such a case was impossible. There is no indifference in God, especially in matters of so much importance ; and a distinct expression of his will, however mild in form, must have had all the authority of a command.

Accordingly, the Scriptures teach us that the whole appointment to the priestly office came from the throne. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high-priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," Heb. 5 : 4, 5, alluding to the subjection which goes into the very idea of sonship. The same Scriptures teach us that the death of Christ was obedience ; (or rather I will say, that his consent to die was such ; for we cannot ascribe obedience to mere passivity or suffering, it being in its very nature active, and always consisting in some act of the mind, terminating there, or producing some act of body, or preventing some act of body or mind). "This commandment have I received of my Father." "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." "Lo I come to do thy will, O God ;—by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "He took upon him the form of a servant," and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." John 10 : 18. 14 : 31. Phil. 2 : 8. Heb. 10 : 9, 10. By this command on the one part, and obedience on the other, the Father appeared demanding satisfaction, and laying on the stroke with his own hand. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," saying, "Awake, O sword, against—my Fellow." Isa. 53 : 6, 10. Zech. 13 : 7.

The whole influence of this act of the Son lay in its being an exercise of obedience. It was not merely a consent to die after being commanded, but as one commanded ; a consent to be dragged to execution as a culprit by divine authority, that the stroke might come from him who was wont to act as the legal Executioner. The whole efficacy of the act was the pure efficacy of obedience, not as a merit, nor as a testimony, but as mere submission to divine authority. Had it not been

obedience, the sufferings would have been of no validity, for they would not have been exacted by the supreme Magistrate from the beloved Son, nor have been any evidence that he would punish others. The whole effect of the act was to bring the sufferings into a proper relation to God, by drawing out the stroke from his own hand.

This discloses the very influence of what was set forth by the action of the priest under the old dispensation. To draw my language from that type, it was necessary that the divine Victim should be offered by God's appointed Priest, and according to his command and direction. The action of the Priest, when stripped of its figurative garb, was the mere yielding of sufferings to the demand of the Supreme Magistrate. What did the action of the ancient priests express? Merely that the victim was offered to God according to his direction. And what did the obedient consent of our High-Priest express? Merely that the Victim was offered to God agreeably to his appointment. The whole need of this pontifical act was the need which existed that the sufferings should be inflicted by the Father's authority and hand.

These two operations of obedience had the exact effect to secure the infliction of sufferings on the beloved Son by the Father's hand. One qualified the Sufferer by rendering him dear to the Father, the other brought his sufferings into the necessary relation to God. Now, did obedience enter into the matter of the atonement by answering either of these purposes? But other things answered these purposes, which were never put into the matter of the atonement.

1. There were other things which constituted the personal qualifications of the Sufferer, which were never put into the matter of the atonement. These were, first, infinite dignity, necessary to render him infinitely dear and of infinite value in the sight of God: secondly, a passible nature, rendering his sufferings possible: thirdly, humanity, instead of the angelic nature, that he might have a life to lose without being annihilated; that he might suffer in the very nature which was polluted with sin, and endure the very death which transgression had brought upon the race. It was necessary for him to be a man for other reasons. If his obedience must be familiarly exhibited before the world to set him forth as the beloved Son of God, he must obey the law which men were accustomed to contemplate; his obedience must be expressed by actions common to them, and under circumstances trying to feelings belonging to their nature. He must, of course, be bound by the particular law given to man; and this he could not be without being a man. For instance, he could not be bound to deny his bodily appetites if he had not a body. He could not be laid under obligation by the seventh com-

mandment in particular, if he did not possess such appetites as are common to men.* There was another reason which does not belong to the present subject. He must have all the sensibilities and trials of our nature, that he might become an object of easy, familiar, and affectionate confidence, as One who had learned from experience to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Heb. 2: 14-18.

But we do not put into the matter of atonement the passible nature and humanity of Christ, though they were necessary qualifications to fit him to make expiation; nor yet his dignity, though that was necessary for much the same reason that his general obedience was. Why, then, should his obedience be thus distinguished?

Supposing the interest which he had in the Father's heart had not been founded on his holy and obedient character, but on such natural affections as exist in men; should we then put his influence as a Son into the matter of atonement? Suppose your son, who has no hold of your heart but what nature gave him, should undertake to suffer under your authority for a rebellious servant. Your affection for him makes his sufferings expressive and convincing to the servants of your firm resolution to support the authority of your laws. That practical proof of your resolution is what satisfies you as guardian of the domestic code. The means of that satisfaction is the matter of atonement in the case. Was his influence upon your heart any part of that which satisfied? No; it only enabled his sufferings to discharge that office.

2. There were other things, which affected the relations of his sufferings, which were never put into the matter of atonement. First, the voluntary consent of the second person to come under the obligation of a command to die. This was necessary to render the command just, and thus to place the sufferings in a proper relation to God and his law; as otherwise they would have been the sufferings of a martyr (allowing the infliction of them to have been possible), and, instead of showing that God would punish transgressors, would only have proved that he would oppress the innocent.† But certainly we cannot put into the atonement an act performed before there was a Mediator. Secondly, his subjection to the law given to man. This was necessary that the stroke which fell on him, though not a literal execution of the law, might more familiarly

* I do not take into consideration the necessity of his honoring by obedience the same law which men had refused to obey. That was a matter which bore relation to his reward.

† I do not say that the consent of the Son while under law was necessary to render his sufferings just; for had he refused after his subjection, what he endured, and infinitely more, would have been the just desert of personal delinquency.

appear to be inflicted for the sin of man ; and, so far as it had this effect, it brought his sufferings into a proper relation to man, and to the Being against whom man had sinned. Thirdly, the laying of the scene of his sufferings in this world. This also was calculated to make a more distinct impression that he suffered for the sins of the human race, and served to bring his death into a proper relation to him against whom the human race had rebelled.

But though his antecedent consent, his subjection to the law given to man, and his residence in our world, had a necessary influence on the relations of his sufferings, who ever put either of them into the matter of the atonement ? Why, then, should his obedience receive that distinction ?

There are but four lights in which imagination itself can view the obedience of Christ as related to the atonement.

(1) As mere submission to authority, and as such going simply to constitute a relation. This was its use in the act of the Priest. The influence of that act lay not in its being a merit, or a testimony, or in its rendering the Agent dear to the Father, but merely in its placing him under the control of authority.

(2) As a qualification rendering him dear to the Father, not with any reference to a reward, not therefore as a merit, but merely to give his sufferings sufficient expression. This was its use in constituting the well beloved Son, or, in typical language, the Lamb without blemish.

(3) As a testimony, by which something was pronounced respecting God and his law.

(4) As a merit, standing related to a reward. The very idea of merit is, that it is something which deserves approbation, reward, or whatever else befits the subject.

Obedience, as it stands related to the honor of the law, is a testimony ; obedience (the same identical act), as it stands related to reward, is merit. No matter in what it consists, whether in bearing witness (one may be rewarded for giving testimony) or in yielding to sufferings, or in performing any other service ; yet as it stands related to a reward, it is merit. By merit I shall therefore mean obedience viewed in the light of claiming a recompense.

If obedience entered into the matter of atonement, it must have been in one of these four shapes. The first two have already been considered, the last two are yet to be examined.

Did, then, the obedience of Christ enter into the matter of atonement in the form of a testimony ? And here it must be steadily kept in mind, that the great point to be proved was, that God would

support the authority of his law by punishing sin.* And now I will show you,

(1) That the obedience of Christ gave no such testimony ;

(2) That if it did, atonement was not made by testimony, but by giving the Father opportunity and means to testify in his own name.

(1) The obedience of Christ gave no such testimony. It declared indeed that the sacred persons were attached to the precept, and were like it themselves, and were willing, so far as the expression of these truths could avail, to promote obedience in creatures. But did all this prove that God would punish sin? No; for first, we have the testimony of facts that these attributes are not inseparable. How many parents, good themselves, and affirming their laws to be good, like old Eli, are irresolute in punishing. And until you first prove the inflexible resolution and universal consistency of God, you know not that the attributes are united in him, and cannot argue from one to the other. But after it was given out that man was to be pardoned, whatever evidence had existed before, there was not now sufficient light respecting that resolution and consistency, till the sufferings of the beloved Son furnished it. And God plainly so declared by resorting to this new revelation of the very things in question. The proof of that resolution and consistency must be completed, by first proving that he would punish, and proving it by the sufferings of Christ before one could infer from his holiness and attachment to the precept that he would punish, and before a testimony to that holiness and

* It has been said in a loose and indefinite way, that the testimony of Christ's obedience honored the law, and so rendered the pardon of sin more consistent with its honor. But because it honored the law in one way, it does not follow that it honored it in the same way that punishment would have done, or in such a way as in any degree to answer in the room of punishment. Because a man has been honored by a commission, it does not follow that it has become consistent with his honor to conceal a culprit from the law, or to pass by a malignant insinuation against himself. What was to be done to render the pardon of sin consistent with the honor of the law? Proof was to be given that the authority of the law should still be supported by punishment. Could the obedience of Christ furnish that proof? This is the sole question. The testimony of his obedience did indeed honor the law; but that honoring was required for a different purpose, to render positive good communicable in a way honorable to the law. This, no less than pardon, must be dispensed in such a way. It was a principle of the first covenant, that none should be rewarded till they had honored the law by the testimony of a perfect obedience. That principle was not to be given up; and therefore Christ must obey before he could be rewarded with that positive good which was intended for men. It has been said, that obedience and sufferings united their testimony to certain truths. But did they unite their testimony to prove that God would punish? Did obedience give this testimony? If not, it testified nothing to the purpose.

attachment could throw any light on the latter question. The proof that he would punish must first be completed, and that completion finished the atonement; for the only object of the atonement, as we have seen, was to prove that God would punish. Secondly, before this new revelation was completed and had decided otherwise, it could not be known that occasional exercises of absolute clemency were not consistent with a perfect character and government, because it could not be known that they would not subserve some important end. Indeed, after it was known that man was to be pardoned, and before the great substitution was revealed, the manifestations of God were decidedly in favor of the conclusion, allowing his character and government to be perfect, that absolute clemency in some instances was consistent with the perfection of both. Until, then, the atonement, by its finished testimony, had decided the question, no proof of God's holiness and attachment to his precept, nor yet of the consistency and perfection of his character, could evince a uniform resolution to inflict evil on account of sin. And it cannot be doubted, that one end of the atonement was to convince the universe that no such exercise of absolute clemency could consist with a perfect government. Thirdly, whatever might be supposed to have dictated the clemency to man, whether wisdom or weakness, yet when the purpose was known, to all the proofs that God would punish, drawn from the general perfection of his nature, the answer would still be returned, He was such before, and yet he resolved not to punish man. Until a great and direct practical proof was given that he would punish, testimonies to his holiness and attachment to his precept could throw no light on his future rigor, for still the answer would be, All this he was before, and yet he did not punish man.

Let us put these things together, and see what would naturally be the cogitations of creatures in the different stages of divine manifestations. From the precept, the penalty, the punishment of devils, and all other exhibitions of God, there was evidence enough before man fell to persuade the well informed that God would punish. But now a new thing is revealed; man is to be pardoned. This raises a doubt how far God will punish in future. Whence the failure no one can tell, for none can know any thing of God further than he is revealed in words or actions. A consistory is held in heaven, and the question is, will God punish hereafter? Here is a fact before them; man has transgressed, and is not to be punished. Whence has the fact arisen? From any reluctance to rigor inconsistent with energy of government? "God is not sufficiently revealed," says Raphael. Gabriel comes forward with testimony that God is holy and attached to his precept, as an argument that he will punish. "It does not answer," says Ithuriel; "he was as holy

and as much attached to his law before, and yet he would not punish man." Here Abdiel rises. "For my part," says he, "I am persuaded that our blessed Creator is perfect, and that it consists with that perfection to let sin sometimes escape without rebuke. Shall not patience and clemency be displayed, as well as justice? I have heard the proof of God's holiness and attachment to his precept; I believe it all, but am not convinced that he will always be severe. I am bound to form my opinions of God from what he appears in his words and actions. He has not said that he will always punish;* but in this glorious clemency to man he has plainly said that he will not; and no proof of his perfection can convince me that what he now declares is false."

It is plain that no evidence of God's holiness and attachment to his precept can convince Ithuriel or Abdiel that he will always exercise rigor, or furnish the least light to lead them to such a conclusion. There must be a new revelation, made by actually inflicting evil on account of the sin of man. And when those holy beings saw the sword of the Almighty thrust through the heart of his beloved Son, in the room of the only sinners who were ever to be pardoned, then they were convinced, not only that no irresolution or inconsistency existed in God, but that it did not comport with a perfect government ever to let sin escape without a frown.

But some suppose that at least the last act of Christ's obedience gave out the testimony that God would punish sin, because it was a voluntary surrender of himself to die on purpose to convince the universe of this very truth. There are two extremes about this subject which we can contemplate with clearness. First, if the Father, still holding the authority of the Godhead, could have consented to suffer in the room of sinners, it would indeed have shown his resolution to punish. The king who consented to lose one of his eyes to save one of his son's, and thus gave two eyes to the law which demanded two, convinced his kingdom that future transgressors would lose both eyes, no less than though justice had taken its literal course. Secondly, where the father and son have two distinct minds, the consent of the latter to die for transgressors is no testimony that the father will punish. Take the case of the prince of Wales which has been supposed. In consenting to die he held this language: "I esteem the penalty just and its execution important, which shows that I view transgression as a great evil, and, of course, that I regard the precept as right and valuable. I am willing to

* The legal threatening is not a pledge of *truth* that the sinner will be punished: (for then how is that pledge redeemed when he is pardoned by the sufferings of another?) but a mere declaration of what is just, and may ordinarily be expected.

give my father this opportunity to prove that he will firmly execute his law, and sincerely hope he may; but I cannot answer for my father; he must speak for himself." Now, though there are not in all respects two minds between the divine Father and Son, they are exhibited in the economy of redemption as two distinct agents. There is a foundation somewhere among the mysteries of the Trinity and personal union for a distinction to exist between the Father as holding the authority of God, and the Mediator in his whole person; and not only for a distinction, but for opposite relations, as opposite as any which can be found among men; such as King and Subject, Master and Servant, the Commander and the One who obeys, the Representative of God and the Representative of sinners, the Demander of satisfaction and the Satisfier, the Inflicter of stripes and the Receiver, the Hearer of prayer and the Supplicant, the One who makes and performs one part of a covenant, and the One who makes and performs the other, the One who owes and grants a reward, and the One who earns and receives it; otherwise there is no foundation in the Trinity for the work of redemption. On the perfect distinctness and marked and stable opposition of these relations, the whole efficacy of the mediatorial influence depended. And this distinction extends to the whole person of Christ, as both divine and human. Not a single official act can be ascribed to the mere man, or to the mere God, but to the Mediator. Those acts in which the man most appears, draw dignity and efficacy from the God; and those acts in which the God most appears, draw influence from the man. The divinity of that person goes through and qualifies all the acts and sufferings of the Mediator, and when it has done that it does no more in the economy of redemption. His godhead, as it is exhibited in this august drama, merely helps to constitute the person of the Mediator. Whoever found in the gospel any other second person than the Son, the Mediator, the Christ? All that is divine in him is thus set apart from the Father and included under the name of the Mediator; that Mediator whose person is so distinct, and whose relations are so opposite to those of the Father. When the Mediator has expressed himself, there is no other second person to help out or to elevate the expression. Now, in this stupendous drama the Father alone holds the arm of authority, and neither the second nor third person appears on the throne from beginning to end; (except the temporary authority delegated to the Son as a reward, which he will resign at the end of the world, when he will again become "subject" to the Father, "that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. 15: 28). In the whole exhibition, the Son appears either a servant or a vicegerent till the curtain falls. The point to be proved was that God would punish; which, according to the

distribution of parts, could be made out only by showing that the Father would punish. And now the question is, whether the Servant in that awful tragedy, in his most degrading act of submission, could pledge himself for the firmness of his Master and King, and for the future exercise of that authority which was dragging him like a criminal to the stake; whether the act of that Servant, urged on by the pressure of a command, without the liberty of choice, with the sword of the Almighty at his breast, under a necessity to obey or suffer the endless penalty of the law, could be considered as the testimony of a distinct and independent witness, or any thing more than the echo of the Father's will. No; the only declaration which I hear from the Son is this: "I am willing to give the Father this opportunity to prove to the universe that he will punish sin. In this I give my opinion that the penalty is just and ought to be enforced, that sin is evil and ought to be punished, that the precept is good and ought to be supported. But it is not for me who have no authority, but am crushed under authority, to answer for the Father. He is about to answer for himself in the awful strokes to be inflicted on me." This leads me to say,

(2) That whatever testimony the obedience of Christ gave, atonement was not made by testimony, but by affording the Father opportunity and means to testify in his own name. A great and glorious testimony was to be sent forth into the universe by means of the atonement, but that testimony was to come from the Father. He stood the Representative of the Godhead, filling the whole field of vision allotted to him who held the arm of authority. The great question to be decided was whether he would resolutely punish. Who was competent to speak for God, and pledge himself for the Most High? It became him who was to answer for the Godhead to speak for himself. Accordingly, he appears the Principal in every part, the Originator and Director of the whole. All is appointed and demanded by his authority, and done in his name, that the testimony may be exclusively his; as the expression of a measure ordered by the master of a house and executed by his servants, is the expression of the master alone. The satisfaction which he demanded as the Protector of the law was not the testimony of a Servant or Son, but an opportunity to give to the universe with his own arm a great practical proof that he would punish sin. What could the testimony or obedience of another do to that end? Nothing would answer but sufferings unsparingly inflicted on the Son of his love with his own hand. And when he had drained upon him the cup of trembling, as Guardian of the law, he was satisfied. Had the person of the sinner stood before him unshielded by a Substitute, he would have shown with his own arm his resolution to punish by sufferings inflicted on the sinner. This would

have been the satisfaction demanded in the case ; and no part of it would have consisted in the consent of the sufferer. If the sinner was to escape, the satisfaction demanded was an opportunity to inflict sufferings on a Substitute, which should give out the same testimony as from his own lips, or rather should shed the same practical proof from the awful gleamings of his own sword. And when he had actually inflicted these sufferings to the full extent which the necessity of the case demanded, and had thus testified by the tremendous voice of his own authority, he was satisfied. Shall we then say that the action of the Father helped to make atonement ? No ; for while all the testimony came from him, all the atonement came from the Son. The matter of atonement, then, came from the Son. This brings us to the conclusion, that the matter of atonement was that which answered to these two descriptions ; it was something yielded by the Son (not the act of yielding), and something by which the Father testified that he would punish sin. Now certainly the testimony of Christ was not that by which the Father testified. The obedience of Christ was not that by which the Father proved in his own Person that he would punish. The consent of Christ did not show that the Father would inflict evil on sinners without their consent. Nothing answers to these two descriptions but the bare sufferings of Christ. I do not say, the sufferings of — no matter who ; but the sufferings of the beloved Son of God. I do not say, sufferings caused by accident, or self-inflicted ; but sufferings inflicted by the supreme Magistrate of heaven and earth. When we speak of the sufferings of the damned, or the death of a malefactor, we always include the act of the magistrate ; we do not mean dead sufferings, but sufferings inflicted by way of punishment. It was sufferings inflicted by the Magistrate which were threatened in the divine law, and sufferings inflicted by the Magistrate must come in their room. But because the act of the Magistrate was necessary, to say that sufferings alone did not constitute the matter of atonement, is like saying, for the same reason, that sufferings alone do not constitute the punishment of the damned.

Let us now look at the Scriptures. And here we have nothing to do with those texts which ascribe both parts of salvation to the death of Christ. These may raise a question whether atonement lifts us to heaven, but cannot touch the question whether obedience helps to deliver us from hell. The solution is, that the death of Christ comprehended both atonement and merit. Neither have we any thing to do with those texts which seem to ascribe both parts of salvation to the obedience of Christ, unless in opposition to those who exclude a vicarious sacrifice altogether. There is a passage of this nature in Romans 5 : 17–21 ; also in Rom. 6 : 23, where the apostle is setting forth the

full contrast between the first Adam, who plunged us to hell, and the Second Adam, who raised us to heaven, with an eye fixed in both cases on the final result. In contemplating the Second Adam, he is standing in heaven and seeing the redeemed arrive, and fastens his attention on the obedience by which the latter half of the salvation was accomplished; and this he did the rather to give a full point to the contrast, the influence of the first Adam lying in disobedience. But if such passages do not prove that obedience is the sole ground of pardon, we have no right to make them say that it is the partial ground, but must understand them as sinking the process of pardon in the great consummation. Nor yet have we any thing to do with those texts which ascribe to the Priest the act of making atonement. They only affirm that he presented that which was the matter of the atonement to God, and thus brought it into the necessary relation to him. Can any thing more be gathered from the type to which they refer? What influence can possibly be ascribed to the Levitical priests but that of presenting the victims to God according to his appointment? Do you add to this, a testimony from the priest that God would punish? But how do you get this testimony out? Through the direct expression of the act as looking at the penalty? But the priest stood there, not to assume the tone of pledging himself for God, but merely to do as he was commanded. Through the expression of the act as looking at the precept of the moral law? This is testimony circuitous indeed. Let us see how it stands. Aaron's consent to obey a ceremonial command (no matter what) is testimony from him that all the precepts of the moral law are good, and so good that God will not fail to punish the transgression of them; and this testimony enters into the very essence of the expiation! No; his atonement lay in no such testimony as this (less direct than that of his ordinary conduct), but in the sin or trespass-offering presented to God. There is one passage, however, which speaks of the action of our great High-Priest, which deserves some attention. It is in the 10th of Hebrews. "Then said he, Lo I come to do thy will, O God:—by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all:—for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Here, you say, a purging quality is expressly ascribed to the obedient action of the Priest. But the fact is, that a higher effect is ascribed to that obedience combined with the sufferings, no less than actual pardon, including the action of the Spirit, which obedience alone secured. The apostle is speaking of the joint influence of obedience and passion as comprehended in the death of Christ, not merely to render sin pardonable (the proper office of the atonement), but to accomplish actual remission, involving regenerating grace. Sanctified here means separated from the

curse of the law, purified from guilt or liability to punishment, pardoned. The meaning of the passage is, that, by obediently surrendering himself to die, and by his actual death, Christ has obtained for as many as by that influence have been brought into a believing state, actual and everlasting remission. Here is the application of the atonement as the reward of Christ's obedience, and not merely the matter of expiation. But show me a text which affirms that either his general or final obedience, as a testimony, helped to render sin pardonable. This must be adduced, if any thing is done to the purpose.

I will now show you from the Scriptures, that the thing which was offered for sin, and which came in the room of punishment, and which laid the foundation for pardon, was no other than suffering.

(1) It was this which was offered for sin. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. — The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted; — he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. — He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. — It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. — He shall bear their iniquities. — He was numbered with transgressors, and he bore the sins of many." "After three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." "Who was delivered for our offences." "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin." "He loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation [propitiatory sacrifice], for our sins." "He is the propitiation [propitiatory sacrifice], for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Isa. 53: 5–12. Dan. 9: 26. Rom. 4: 25. 1 Cor. 15: 3. 2 Cor. 5: 21. Heb. 9: 28. 1 Pet. 2: 24. 3: 18. 1 John 2: 2. 4: 10.

(2) It was this which came in the room of punishment. "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. — The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. 53: 4, 5.

(3) It was this which laid the foundation for pardon. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." "Being now justified [pardoned] by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we

shall be saved by his life." "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. — For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins : — for then would they not have ceased to be offered ? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." Rom. 5 : 9, 10. Gal. 3 : 13. Col. 1 : 14. Heb. 9 : 22, 23. 10 : 2, 4.

But this question respecting the testimony of obedience, it must after all be confessed, has no very important bearing on the extent of the atonement. The great point is to distinguish between the matter of expiation and the merit of obedience, with its claim to a reward. This discrimination can be made whether the testimony of obedience goes into the matter of atonement or not. We can distinguish between atonement and a claim to reward for making atonement, whether the matter of expiation consists of two ingredients or one. I suppose that sufferings alone satisfied and rendered sin pardonable ; but if obedience, while earning a reward, sent out a testimony which helped to satisfy and render sin pardonable, it is no matter as relates to the distinction between the satisfying matter and that which constituted the claim to a reward. Take the illustration before used. I want to make a clear distinction between that which heals the patient and that which establishes the claim of the physician to a fee. According to my theory, the healing efficacy lies in the pill ; the action of the physician has no other influence than to administer it in a right way ; and the claim to a fee is grounded on that action. Here we can easily distinguish between the healing medicine and the action which creates the claim. Now change the ground and assign a new office to the action. Say that the physician's approach had an influence upon the patient's imagination which helped to work the cure. The remedy, then, consisted of two ingredients, the pill, and that influence upon the imagination ; the action of the physician had two effects ; it administered the medicine and shed a healing influence ; the reward is for the action still, and neither for the pill nor for the casual influence dropped upon the patient's mind.* In this case, though we cannot set up the broad distinction between the healing matter and the action, we can still distinguish between that matter and the action viewed as entitling to reward. The action, considered as sending forth such a casual influence, is distinguishable from the action viewed as related to a reward. The dif-

* Christ, we shall see, is rewarded only for the merit of obedience ; and neither for sufferings as such, nor for any testimony which his action gave out.

ference is still plainly seen between the healing influence and the claim to a fee. Upon the theory which I have advocated, we can set up the broad distinction between the influence of passion and claim of action. But the distinction is visible enough upon the other plan. In either way, we have the distinction between the influence of the atonement and the claim to a reward for making atonement.

This leads us to see the immense importance of discriminating between the matter of atonement and the merit of obedience, in order to separate the proper influence of the expiation from a claim to reward. Our brethren have a strong reason for retaining obedience in the matter of atonement. It is vital to their system to place merit there, in order to give to the atonement a power to secure the gift of faith, and thus to accomplish actual reconciliation. Without an influence to secure the gift of faith, it must either fail to accomplish reconciliation by its own power, or must obtain remission for stubborn unbelievers. Our brethren, therefore, are willing to comprehend in the atonement the whole influence of Christ; and if they succeed in this they carry their point, at least so far as relates to the meaning and proper application of the term. For if the atonement contains an influence which secures the gift of faith, there is atonement for none but those who will ultimately believe. It becomes, then, a vital question, whether merit is comprehended in the matter of the atonement.

In settling this question, it is necessary to recur again to the radical idea of merit. In God, merit is excellence, viewed as deserving honor, love, gratitude, praise, and service. We put into his merit also whatever he is to us or has done for us which justly entitles him to our acknowledgments. In those who are under law merit is obedience, considered as deserving a legal reward. It is obedience viewed purely in its relation to a recompense. If, then, we put merit into the matter of atonement, we place it there, not as that by which any thing is to be proved (for that would be a testimony, not a merit); not therefore as any thing which is to witness that God will punish sin; (indeed, how can the merit of one prove that God will punish another?) not therefore as any thing which is to answer in the room of punishment. Here, then, we abandon the whole end of the atonement, and give up the need of a vicarious sacrifice altogether. It comes out that the release of the sinner is granted to Christ purely as a reward. And this is the ground taken by those who deny a vicarious sacrifice, and place the whole atonement in obedience. But the fault of this scheme is, that such an atonement furnishes no proof that God will execute his law, and answers in no degree the end of punishment, and therefore is not fitted to come in the room of punishment and to be a cover for sin. On the other hand,

the dispensation of pardon on this ground would be a plain declaration that God would not always inflict evil on account of sin. Suppose a culprit is released as the reward of a dutiful son, There is no evil inflicted in the case; what evidence that any will ever be inflicted? What has been may be again, and punishment may always be set aside out of favor to some one who has obeyed, or even without that consideration. Indeed, the clemency plainly declares, that rigor is not always necessary, and is not always to be exercised. Nor can you make merit partially the ground of pardon, without proportionably drawing after it the same effects. In exact proportion as pardon is dispensed on the ground of being a reward to Christ, and not on the ground of substituted sufferings, you abate the evidence that sin must always receive a frown. Indeed, there is no halving of things in this way. If the legal impediment to pardon is partly taken away by Christ's deserving a reward, it must have been such as could not need a vicarious sacrifice to remove it. For if the impediment was, that the law had threatened sufferings, and sufferings must come in their room, how could the merit of a Substitute touch the difficulty? And what need, I further ask, of any thing but the sufferings of the Son of God to clear away such an impediment as this?

What possible influence could merit have in removing the impediments to pardon? To what does the proposition amount? That the sins of believers are pardonable because Christ deserved a reward! What conceivable relation can exist between these two things? Christ's desert of reward, considered by itself, could lend no influence to render sin pardonable. Where is the text that asserts or hints at any such thing? On the contrary, have we not seen that sufferings, and sufferings alone, are everywhere displayed in the Scriptures as the ground of remission?

If in any way merit could enter into that provision for moral agents which we call the atonement, it must be on the principle, that the honor of the law demanded that the release of believers from misery should be a reward to Christ. That no positive good could be dispensed to men, in consistency with the highest honor of the law, otherwise than as his reward, I admit, and expect to prove. But a bare release from the curse was a mere negative good, and therefore was fully provided for by his "being made a curse for us." It so happens, indeed, that the release is a reward to Christ, as the matter lies between the Sacred Persons; because to him it is a positive good, both as a public approbation of his offering and a gratification of his benevolence. But whether he is gratified and honored in this thing or not, is a point lying wholly between the Divine Persons, and not at all affecting the atonement as a provision for moral

agents. Christ's being gratified and honored by the pardon of believers does not make their pardon consistent with the honor of the law. And on the other hand, had he ceased to exist after offering the spotless sacrifice, and thus ceased to be susceptible of reward, the pardon of believers would not have injured the law. The provision for moral agents in relation to pardon was therefore complete without any influence derived from the claim of Christ to a reward.

But you say, this is not what we mean. We allow that nothing helped to render the sins of believers pardonable but the sufferings of the Son of God: but we insist that the cover of sin is nothing short of that which accomplishes actual remission; and as merit procured the gift of faith, without which pardon could not be dispensed, it had an essential influence in constituting that cover. The question, then, turns on this, whether the כפר of the Bible (viewed as accepted of God), merely obtained pardon for believers, or had a further influence to make believers. This is a question to be examined in another place. In the mean time let it be remembered, that we have arrived at the conclusion that the merit of Christ, or his claim to a reward, had no influence to render the sins of believers pardonable. And if it shall appear hereafter that the atonement, aside from its covenanted acceptance, was limited to this very influence, it will be established that merit constituted no part of the cover for sin.*

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE AND REWARD.

THERE is one point to be settled at our entrance upon this subject; and that is, that Christ was rewarded for nothing but obedience. To one who never brought this proposition before his eye, it may wear, at first sight, a forbidding aspect; but a few reflections will convince him that it must be true. Christ was "under law," and his reward was a legal one; but the law never promised a recompense to any thing but obedience. No claim could be created on the Father but by a promise

* The author has the pleasure to acknowledge his obligations to his friend and brother, the Rev. Dr. James Richards of Newark, for important assistance in this chapter, as well as for his judicious remarks on the book in general. This, however, is said without making him responsible for any of the opinions which the book contains.

from him, and no promise appears but to One under law, for services rendered in obedience to the command of his King. One of the duties enjoined upon him was to lay down his life. So far as that was a duty it was obedience, and no further than it was a duty was it entitled to a reward. That act was of greater merit than other acts of obedience, because it involved greater self-denial; but the sufferings bore no other relation to the reward than as being the highest test of obedience. Christ was rewarded for his obedience "unto death," not for his sufferings viewed as uncommanded; not therefore for sufferings in themselves considered. What claim could uncommanded sufferings have to a reward? Should a creature in any part of the universe inflict pain on himself which God had never required, who would be bound to recompense him? There is no such duty of supererogation in the kingdom of God. But if the sufferings of the Son, only as commanded, could be entitled to a reward, it was the obedience of surrendering himself to die, and not the pain as such, which created the claim. Accordingly, we are expressly taught that his whole reward was for obedience. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Phil. 2: 7-11. This name was the Son of God, which he obtained "by inheritance"; Heb. 1: 4; and the plain meaning is, that by filial obedience he obtained the inheritance and all the honors of a Son, that is, his complete reward.

Having settled this point, I will now exhibit, in one connected view, the different influences of Christ's obedience, that the reader may have them clearly before his mind in all our future stages.

(1) The most simple influence of obedience was in the action of the Priest; where it operated, not as a merit, nor as a testimony, nor as an endearing quality, but as simple obedience; having no other effect than to cause the sufferings to be yielded to the demand of the Father, and inflicted by his authority and hand.

(2) Obedience constituted the well beloved Son, or, in typical language, the Lamb without blemish; and its influence here terminated in rendering him dear to the Father, without any reference to a reward; merely making his sufferings expressive of God's inflexible resolution to punish sin. This was not, therefore, the proper influence of merit.

These two influences went to qualify the sufferings, and to bring them into the necessary relation to God. They therefore appertained to the atonement.

(3) Obedience gave out a testimony honorable to God and his law. Some choose to put this influence into the matter of the atonement, as going to render sin pardonable. Whether this is done or not is of no

material consequence as relates to the main question to be discussed in this treatise. I suppose, however, that its operation was merely to supply the place of that testimony which our perfect obedience would have given out on its way to a reward. Our obedience would have stood connected only with a reward, and would have given out a testimony honorable to the law. If the testimony of Christ takes the place of our testimony, it has nothing to do with the pardon of sin, but is merely an effluence of obedience as it stands related to a reward. But that effluence itself, it is proper to say, bears no relation to the reward. It is merely a casual influence, which issues from obedience as it goes along. Or, to speak more literally, it is the mere relation which obedience bears to the honor of the law, and not the relation which it bears to a recompense. The relation which it bears to a recompense lies in no report which it sends forth, but in its own intrinsic excellence. So the good man is rewarded for his goodness, and not for the influence which his example may chance to have on others.

These three ends were answered by obedience, not as a thing related to a reward, not therefore as a merit, but as merely fitted to render the sufferings expressive, to bring them into a proper relation to God, and to honor the law. When obedience had exerted upon the sufferings the first two influences (some add the third), the atonement was complete, though not yet accepted; and complete of course without the influence of merit, or without owing its completion to any claim which Christ had to a reward: because it was not necessary to the honor of the law that the release of believers from misery (a mere negative good in regard to them) should be a reward to him. And if, without injuring the law, pardon might be granted to believers without being a reward to Christ, then the Protector of the law was satisfied (so far as satisfaction stood connected with pardon) without the aid of Christ's merit, and had in his hands all that he could receive from the Son to enable him to grant remission to those who would believe. And thus that provision for moral agents in relation to pardon which depended on satisfaction yielded to the Guardian of law, was complete without the influence of Christ's merit. The effect of all this was, that the sins of men, allowing them to be believers, were pardonable. On the ground of that satisfaction, God could remit the offences of the penitent without injuring the law, but he was not bound till another influence was superadded. This was as far as bare atonement, separated from its covenanted acceptance, could go.

When the sins of men were thus rendered pardonable in case they would believe, there was a change wrought in their relations to the law. This change we can contemplate distinctly from every thing else; and

can plainly see that the sufferings of the beloved Son, separated from his claim to a reward, could accomplish this and no more. That which produced this change in the relations of moral agents ought to have a name. I call it the atonement, and affirm that it answers exactly to the כִּפּוּר of the Hebrews, when the latter is separated from its covenanted acceptance. But whether it does or not will appear in the next chapter.

All the other influences of obedience which are to be named were influences of merit, and produced their effects only by obtaining a reward. Before proceeding further, therefore, let us stop and fix on some marks by which a thing may be known to appertain to Christ's reward. I lay down the following principles. All that Christ did as one of the contracting parties was to obey even "unto death." Whatever that obedience and death, stripped of every extrinsic circumstance, could accomplish, was done by himself; the rest was done by the Father, and, so far as it expressed approbation of Christ or honored him, or directly gratified his benevolence, was a part of his reward. Every effect, then, which followed his obedience and death, beyond what their own necessary influence could accomplish, and was honorable and gratifying to him, appertained to his reward. What, then, did the necessary influence of his obedience and death effect? It rendered every thing which followed consistent with the honor of the law, and created a covenant claim on the Father for the whole. It went no further. The bringing to pass of all that followed was the Father's part, and was done in pursuance of his covenant engagements; which engagements were suspended on Christ's obedience "unto death." All, therefore, which actually followed, was Christ's stipulated reward. I now proceed to say,

(4) That the merit of obedience gave to the Redeemer a covenant claim to the acceptance of his atonement. Because the sufferings of a Substitute were capable of answering in the room of the punishment of the believing and reclaimed, God was not obliged to accept them and release believers, until he had bound himself by promise; and that promise was suspended on the condition of Christ's obeying "unto death." It was that obedience, then, which gave him a covenant claim to the pardon, on the ground of his atonement, of as many as would believe. This was a covenant claim to the acceptance of the atonement, and rendered the pardon of believers certain. This claim was completed when he expired, and was acknowledged when he arose.*

* It has been said that the acceptance of the atonement as pronounced in the resurrection of Christ, was a public acquittal of him from the guilt he had assumed. The meaning cannot be that he was acquitted from sin, for he had no sin, but that he was acquitted from a liability to suffer. His resurrection was a public declaration that his sufferings were accepted for sinners, and that therefore he was under no

The atonement, viewed as thus accepted, secured the pardon of believers; and in going thus far and no further it exactly answered, as we shall see in the next chapter, all the purposes ever ascribed to the *כִּפּוּר* of the old dispensation after it was accepted of God.

Thus it was not the same influence which atoned, that insured the acceptance of the atonement. That which atoned was the sufferings of the beloved Son inflicted by the Father's hand; that which insured the acceptance was the merit of Christ, constituting a claim to a reward for general obedience, and particularly for making expiation. The completion of the atonement and the security of its acceptance were two things. One constituted a provision in the Father's hands for moral agents; the other appertained to Christ's reward, and merely transferred the provision to his hands, by securing to him the pardon of all who would believe.

(5) The merit of obedience gave to the Redeemer a covenant claim to be honored and gratified by that open recognition of him and explanation of the design of his death which gave it a bearing upon public law and the relations of men; which declared its acceptance, and fairly placed mankind on what we call probation. The removal of the vail which had concealed his glory and the design of his death from men, and the whole annunciation of him to the world by his resurrection and the promised mission of the Spirit, belonged to the Father. His obedience "unto death" entitled him to be thus publicly acknowledged and offered to the world. That obedience was terminated when he said on the cross, "It is finished." This was the last act by which he yielded himself to the ignominy of the sepulchre, which was to consummate his atonement. Now he became entitled to burst from the vail which had enclosed him. He who, in obedience to the Father, had studiously concealed himself that he might accomplish his humiliation; who, content with furnishing just evidence enough to support a general faith, had often charged men not to make him known, and particularly had commanded those who witnessed the manifestation of his sonship and future glory on Mount Tabor, "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen again from the dead," Matt. 17 : 9, was now entitled to be "declared the

necessity or obligation to suffer further. In this sense he was acquitted as the representative of others; or, in plain language, his atonement was accepted as the ground of the pardon of those who would believe. His resurrection was furthermore a public attestation of his personal acceptance, as one who had obeyed and become entitled to the reward. It has been said, that, if his sacrifice had not been accepted, he never would have left the sepulchre. This needs explanation. Had not his sacrifice been accepted, it would have proved that he had not obeyed, and then he must have suffered the full penalty of the law, and, of course, could not have left the sepulchre at that time, nor ever with glory.

Son of God with power — by the resurrection," Rom. 1 : 4; and to receive that Spirit whose inspiration should make him fully known, first to the disciples on the day of Pentecost, and then to the world on the evangelic page. Never till then did the dearest of his disciples know enough to say, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This public explanation, which carried in it an offer and conditional promise of life to the world, — which laid a foundation for faith, and actually placed men on probation, — was an essential part of his reward. Thus a state of probation, with all the offers and promises which it involves, was procured for the world by the merit of the Redeemer.

Thus we are gradually sliding into the consideration of that positive good which could not, consistently with the highest honor of law, be issued to the world otherwise than as the reward of Christ. All that was negative, or related to a mere deliverance from the curse, might have been granted on the ground of the atonement had Christ not been in existence to be gratified and honored by it. Not so with positive good. It was a law of the first covenant, that no positive good should proceed from God but in approbation of a righteousness perfect for the time the subject had been in existence. This principle, as I hope to show in the Appendix, was not to be given up. And by contriving to measure out all the positive good intended for the human race as a reward to Christ, the principle was preserved. And if the whole of that good followed as the effect of his work, and was honorable and gratifying to him, we have public evidence that the whole was to him a reward. We have seen that a state of probation, with all the offers and promises which it involves, appertained to his reward; and we have equal evidence that all the privileges and comforts fitted to such a state came in the same way. If Christ is the "Heir of all things," Heb. 1 : 2, and if the all things which constitute his inheritance are as extensive as the interest which he was empowered to manage, or the all things in heaven and earth over which he was appointed to rule; if his inheritance comprehends all that which constituted him "the First-born of every creature," and gave him "in all things — the preëminence," and all that by which he was made "better than the angels," and "obtained a more excellent name than they," to wit, the name of the Son of God, Col. 1 : 15–20. Heb. 1 : 4; then there is nothing on earth which is not included in his inheritance. If, furthermore, he received the whole inheritance of a Son for his filial conduct, as the Appendix will prove, then he obtained the whole by the merit of his obedience. And if, lastly, this whole portion of a Son was committed to him, not for his own private use, but for the benefit of those who actually par-

take of it, then all the blessings which the universal race enjoy, as they come from God, are grounded on the obedience of Christ, and pass to mankind through him.

It is often said, that positive blessings come to us for Christ's sake, or out of respect to his righteousness: what meaning can there be in these expressions other than what has now been explained? If a positive blessing is bestowed out of respect to Christ's righteousness, it is the reward of his righteousness. If it is not the reward of his righteousness, how is it bestowed for his sake? This general principle being settled, I proceed to say,

(6) That the merit of his obedience obtained for him the gift of faith to the elect. No truth is more clearly set forth in the Scriptures, than that the raising up of a holy seed was an essential part of the reward of his obedience "unto death." "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death." *Is.* 53: 10-12. Thus, his obedience "unto death," like travail pains, was to bring forth a numerous seed, in other words, was to procure the sanctification of his elect. After a prophetic account of his death in the second Psalm, there is subjoined a promise of reward: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Thus the inheritance of a Son, received for his filial obedience, includes a redeemed kingdom, a holy seed. The same truth is taught in many other places. "Thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon One that is mighty I have exalted One chosen out of the people. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father [that is, he shall be my Son]. Also I will make him my First-born [my Heir], higher than the kings of the earth. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven." *Ps.* 2: 6-8. 89: 3-37. But there is no need of multiplying quotations; his kingdom of redeemed subjects, received as the reward of his obedience "unto death," forms the leading topic of the Old Testament and the New.

Thus the gift of faith to the elect is Christ's reward. But this is not all: it could not be bestowed in any other way in consistency with the highest honor of the law. The sanctifying Spirit is a positive good if

there is any positive good in the universe; and therefore, according to the principle established in Eden, was not to be granted but as the reward of a perfect righteousness. In the first moment of Adam's existence, the necessity of the case required that the Spirit should be given him not as a reward. During his probation, and while a claim to eternal life was not established, the Spirit was not indeed due to him as a reward, and might, as the event proved, be withheld, even before he had sinned: yet during that period it could not be bestowed but in approbation of a righteousness perfect for the time the subject had been in existence; because as soon as the first sin arose, and approbation ceased to be entire, it could be bestowed no longer. Had Adam remained faithful during his probation, the Spirit would have been eternally given him as a covenanted reward. And then the first motion of sanctifying power on his infant son, would have been the reward of the perfect righteousness of the father; and all subsequent motions would have been the reward both of father and son. It is exactly so in respect to the Second Adam. In the first moment of his existence under law, the necessity of the case required that the Spirit should be given him not as a reward. During his probation, and before his claim was established, the Spirit could not be given him but in approbation of a righteousness perfect for the time he had been under law. After his probation was closed, he had an eternal claim to the action of the Spirit upon his human nature as a reward. And now the first motion of sanctifying grace on those who were given him for a seed is solely his reward; subsequent motions are a legal reward to him, and a gracious reward to them. In the case of both Adams, the honor of the law required that the Spirit should be given to the seed only as the legal reward of the federal Parent; that the principle of granting no positive good till the law had first received the homage of obedience, might be preserved.

We shall now be able to make a clear distinction between the provision for moral agents in relation to pardon, and the influence which secures the gift of faith. Whatever renders the sins of men pardonable if they will believe, and especially that which secures to them pardon if they do believe, is certainly a complete provision for them as moral agents in relation to pardon. You may put into that provision whatever you please, and still a provision for the pardon of men if they as agents will believe, is entirely distinct from the personal claim of Christ to the gift of faith to them as mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions. But the matter of the provision, as I have considered it, is entirely different from the matter of the claim. That which renders sin pardonable is the mere sufferings of the beloved Son inflicted by the Father's hand; that which constitutes the claim of Christ to the gift of faith is the merit

of his obedience ; as wide a difference as between passion and action. Or if you bring in the testimony of obedience to render sin pardonable, still there is a manifest difference between the testimony which obedience gives out, and the intrinsic merit of it which claims a reward. In both views, that which renders the sins of believers pardonable is wholly distinct from that which secures the gift of faith. But you say, if the provision for pardon is considered as embracing all that which renders the pardon of believers certain, the claim of merit enters into the provision, for it was merit which insured the acceptance of the sufferings. True, but it was merit claiming a different reward from the gift of faith. The same merit may insure the acceptance of the sufferings, and thus place the provision for pardon in the hands of Christ, by making sure to him the remission of all who will believe, and may also secure the gift of faith ; but it is merit in two distinct operations, and in two operations which are separated in fact : for who will doubt that the sufferings were so accepted for some that they would be pardoned if they would believe, who yet never receive the gift of faith ? But, however similar the matter of the provision may be to that of the claim, yet a provision for the pardon of men if they will believe is wholly different from the claim of Christ to the gift of faith. Whether the atonement includes the provision only, or the provision and claim, is not now the question ; but let the distinction between the two be marked and remembered.

Thus the influence of merit is directly concerned in the application of the atonement, or in bringing about actual pardon. This is the last effect of obedience as it stands related to the covering of sin. Here I might close the chapter ; but from a wish to exhibit all the offices of obedience at one view, I will proceed in a cursory manner to its bearing on our positive happiness and the exaltation of Christ.

(7) As a very important part of the reward of the Redeemer, the merit of obedience obtained for him the sure and complete salvation of all who once believe, including all the positive blessings of the life that now is and of that which is to come. This will be largely proved in the Appendix. All positive good was given him as his reward, and thus proceeded from God on the original principle of Eden. But it was not given him for his own private use, but for the benefit of men ; to be partly bestowed on the race at large in comforts fitted to a state of probation, and to be in a higher sense offered to all, and actually given to some as a final good. Given to whom ? For whom did he receive the final good ? Here let it be distinctly remarked, that as the reward was bestowed for the public and official obedience of Christ, the grant was of course public (to make an open exhibition of his reward and his influence on the happiness of mankind), and was no part of that secret contract which selected the in-

dividuals of the elect. In that public grant, the good that was to be offered to men, and to be bestowed on them as a gracious reward was not made over to him for the benefit of the elect as such, or for the unbelieving elect, but for believers, the members of his body, the church. This public grant of the outward parts of the inheritance took no notice of elect or non-elect, but only of believers, the body of Christ. All things were detached from Godhead and made over to him for the ultimate use of his body. This form of the grant accomplished two things. First, it grounded the positive happiness of believers on his obedience. They partake of his reward as "joint-heirs" with him who is the "Heir of all things." Secondly, it brought the all things into a new relation to a whole world of moral agents. A grant made for the benefit of believers was a grant made for the benefit of all who would believe; leaving all at liberty to share in it if they would do their duty, and becoming thus a grant for all as moral agents. This was not a provision by which all or any as passive receivers might obtain the first gift of faith, but it was a provision by which all as agents might receive the whole amount of positive good as a gracious reward for believing and obeying. In that grant was contained the public ministration of the Spirit, not for the benefit of all as mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions, but for the use of all as moral agents, to give them convicting light (such as is adapted to present motives to agents), and to be offered to them in its highest operations as an unalienable good, if they humbly and believingly seek it. There was a provision, then, in this grant, for the continued sanctification of Simon Magus, if he as an agent would once believe, though not for his regeneration as a mere passive receiver of sanctifying impressions. And this new relation to a world of moral agents of the all things of which Christ is Heir, was a part of his reward. He was rewarded by that grant which drew the new relation after it, and which without that circumstance would not have been the same reward. Thus the merit of Christ's obedience procured eternal life and all positive good for the race at large, in the highest sense in which they could be procured for mere moral agents; that is, for creatures not to be acted upon by sanctifying influence except as a reward to themselves. Accordingly a part of that good, viz., a state of probation with all the means and comforts which it involves, is for his sake conferred on the race at large, and the rest is offered to all as what he procured for them in such a sense that it is to be theirs if they will make it their own.

These points, I hope, will present themselves to those who are acquainted with the sacred page, as self-evident truths. If not, I must rely on the proof to be exhibited that such a provision for all as agents was made in the atonement; for it is not the object of this treatise to go

beyond the expiation; and none will doubt, if suffering made provision for all as agents in reference to their pardon, that obedience made an equally extensive provision in relation to their positive happiness. Indeed, many of the texts which I shall bring to prove so extensive a provision in the atonement, equally prove the other part; but I shall quote them only to establish the former point. And this notice I give once for all, that I may not seem to quote passages with inattention to a part of their meaning.

Thus this public grant to Christ for the benefit of believers, constituted a provision for a whole world of moral agents. This was its first and simplest operation. But besides this provision for agents, there was another part of Christ's reward which related to sanctifying impressions on mere passive receivers. This, in general, was promised him in the public covenant, as we have seen; but the individuals who were to be the subjects of these impressions were fixed in a secret compact, altogether distinct from that from which the public transactions took their nature and their bearing upon public law, and relating merely to Christ's reward. In virtue of that secret compact, altogether distinct from that on which both parts of the provision for moral agents were founded, the elect were caused to believe, and were thus brought into that state where all the provisions and promises could act upon them, and where others also, had they of their own accord believed, would have found the same provisions.

And now, if you ask about the secret purposes of the divine mind, the blessings of that grant were specially intended for the elect; but if you inquire about the form of the public instrument, the blessings were delivered to Christ for all alike.

(8) The merit of obedience gave to the Redeemer a covenant claim to the administration of his Father's government, with all the public honors which surround his throne. That government, which he desired and considers a reward, he exercises, not only over mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions (quickenings whom he will), but over a world of moral agents, offering them indiscriminately the benefits of his purchase, and commanding, inviting, promising, threatening, rewarding, and punishing, as though they were independent of the Spirit. This new and more benign government over a world of moral agents, founded on those new relations which his work had established, it was an important object with him to administer, as calculated to bring out to view the riches of the divine nature, and to promote the happiness of the universe. This was the ultimate end of those provisions for moral agents which the omniscience of God foresaw would, in many instances, through the misconduct of men, fail to prove an ultimate blessing.

Thus the parts of Christ's reward were, first, the acceptance of the atonement; secondly, that public recognition of him and explanation of the design of his death which laid a foundation for faith; thirdly, the gift of faith to the elect; fourthly, the grant of all positive good for the use of men as probationers, and in a higher sense for as many as would believe, constituting a provision for a world of moral agents; fifthly, the administration of his Father's government, particularly over a race of agents brought into a new relation to God. By this enumeration we may learn what reward was promised to Christ in the covenant of redemption. If he had a claim to each of these parts, we know that his claims could be founded on nothing but contract. Either, then, all these things were promised, or God bestows sovereign rewards for which the recipient has no claim. Against the latter alternative I allege, first, that, so far as we can judge, there was the same reason why the whole reward should be promised as a part,—why the whole influence and effect of Christ's work should be settled by covenant as that a part should be. Secondly, the whole reward was legal and conferred by the Lawgiver; and it is according to the principles of a legal government to promise the whole reward beforehand. Thirdly, if it was important for the honor of the law that all positive good should be known to be issued as Christ's reward, it would tend to make a more distinct impression of this truth, to have it understood that all had been promised him as his reward. Fourthly, whatever God saw beforehand would be a suitable reward to Christ, and was determined to confer, must have been known to the Son; and the only difference between promising and not promising related to the bond; and why a part of what both divine persons knew to be a suitable reward, and knew would be conferred, should be exempted from the bond which fixed the other part, no one I believe can conceive. Fifthly, every part of the reward was promised in general terms in the revelation made to the church. And why greater promises should be made in public than had been made in private, it would be hard to tell. On the whole, we may safely conclude that Christ had a covenant claim to every part of his reward, and that the reward itself discloses what the covenant was. The light thus cast upon the covenant of redemption, I shall have occasion to make use of in a subsequent part.

CHAPTER V.

ATONEMENT NOT RECONCILIATION.

THE chief design of this chapter is to fix the meaning of the word atonement, and to separate that part of Christ's influence which falls under this name from all the rest.

We are reconciled by the atonement, because that is the ground of our reconciliation ; but atonement is not itself reconciliation or pardon, neither does it contain the influence which secures reconciliation.

I. Atonement is not itself reconciliation or pardon. For then either no atonement was made for Paul before his conversion, or he was pardoned while in a state of settled rebellion. The former will not be said, the latter cannot be true. At the time of his conversion, he was exhorted to be baptized and to "wash away" his "sins." Then for the first time he "obtained mercy," and found that so far from being pardoned from eternity, he had escaped the unpardonable sin only by acting "ignorantly in unbelief." Acts 22 : 16. 1 Tim. 1 : 13, 16.

It is indeed said that "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," Rom. 5 : 10 ; but this can only mean that when we were in a state of enmity and condemnation, we were arrested and brought into a state of holiness and justification. It cannot mean that we were justified while enemies ; for the great object of the Epistle, and of the context itself, is to prove, not justification without faith, but justification by faith.

This dream of eternal justification has no support in the Word of God. We read indeed of the decree of election, and of a seed given to Christ before the foundation of the world ; but these were not eternal justification. Condemnation and justification express the relations and actual treatment of moral agents, which cannot be older than the existence of creatures ; that decree and promise regarded the elect in the light of mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions. The latter appertained to the covenant of redemption ; justification takes place under the covenant of grace. Those were a purpose and promise respecting men ; this the actual treatment of men. It was eternally purposed and promised that the elect as passive should be regenerated, and that when they should believe they should be justified by faith, a privilege which was to be common to all if they would believe. All that was peculiar to the elect in the purpose or promise respected them as passive, but justification respects men as agents. To make that peculiar thing justification, is utterly confounding the two characters of men, and what

I shall hereafter have occasion to call the two corresponding departments of divine operations. It is speaking of one department in the language of the other, and ascribing to one the acts of the other; and is as inconsistent and as expressive of falsehood, as for Paul to have addressed a Jewish synagogue as one speaking to a Roman senate, giving titles, and alluding to facts as present which existed only at Rome.

Or if you insist that the distinctive purpose and promise respected the elect as agents, and secured to them as such a privilege which other agents would not enjoy, still it was not eternal justification. Was it the eternal purpose and promise that they should be justified? So it was the eternal purpose and promise that they should exist, and that they should believe: but did they exist and believe from eternity? They could not be justified in Christ before they had sinned and were condemned: and did they sin and were they condemned from eternity? Eternally condemned and eternally justified! An eternal design to justify was no more eternal justification, than an eternal design to create was eternal creation. You might as well talk of the eternal enactment of the law, or the eternal mission of the Spirit.

The universal language of Scripture is, that justification is in time. In Abraham's day the justification of the Gentiles was yet future. "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Gal 3: 8. Even the prediction and promise were not justification.

There never was any agreement or understanding between the sacred persons either in heaven or on Calvary, that agents should be justified until as agents they had believed. Christ never stipulated that men should be justified from eternity, but died that they might be justified after their effectual calling. "For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called [not they which were elected], might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." The order of links in the golden chain is this: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified." Rom. 8: 30. Heb. 9: 15. The whole doctrine of justification by faith lies with the weight of a world on the same side.

The elect themselves before their conversion, instead of being justified, are actually under condemnation. It is expressly affirmed that they are "by nature the children of wrath even as others." The first motion of faith in every instance (among adults), is the boundary between a state of condemnation and justification. "He that believeth — is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already." "As

many as are of the works of the law [which is explained to mean, as many as have not faith], are under the curse." Accordingly pardon is everywhere placed after repentance. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon." "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and will be their God; for I will forgive their iniquity." What else is implied in prayers for pardon offered up in time? What else can be meant by actual remission in answer to prayer? What else by God's being now "ready to pardon," and by the exhortation to sinners "to flee from the wrath to come?" What by the parables of the publican, and the prodigal son? Paul was sent to turn the Gentiles from the power of Satan unto God, that they "might receive forgiveness of sins." The whole consistory of apostles were sent forth to preach "repentance and remission of sins," and to say, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." "Him hath God exalted, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee." Ex. 34: 9. Num. 14: 20. 2 Chron. 30: 18. Neh. 9: 17. Ps. 25: 11. Isa. 55: 7. Jer. 31: 31-34. 33: 8. Luke 3: 7. 15: 11-32. 18: 13, 14. 24: 47. John 3: 18. Acts 2: 38. 3: 19. 5: 31. 8: 22. 26: 18. Rom. 3: 28. Gal. 3: 10. Eph. 2: 3. James 5: 15. 1 John 1: 9.

Thus the elect themselves plainly lie under condemnation until (if adults) they believe. Though in relation to them as passive receivers of sanctifying impressions, there was a decree and promise that they should receive faith, yet as agents (and as such only do they bear any relation to the law, its precept, threatening, or promise, to sin, condemnation, pardon, justification, punishment, or reward) they are not justified till they believe.

Nor could it possibly have comported with the honor of the law for any atonement, let it consist in what it might, or for any thing else, to have procured remission for men, and cast over them the shield of impunity, while continuing to trample the law in the dust, and spurning the expedient devised for its support. This would have ruined the law and defeated the very end of the atonement, which was to convince the universe that transgressors should not go unpunished. Instead of pronouncing in the ears of the whole creation that the breakers of the law in all worlds and ages should die, it would have proclaimed impunity to rebellion in all its maddest and most confirmed ravings. No atonement could protect a single impenitent sinner, and pronounce upon

him that he should never be punished, without losing the whole expression which it was intended to make. Look at the case of the prince of Wales. Why did he die? To make a deep impression on the multitude that no counterfeiter should ever escape. Suppose that his death and the covenant connected with it had bound the arm of government not to strike the ten criminals though going on in their old ways, and had thus let them loose to counterfeit with impunity. When these culprits stalk abroad untouched, and drive their nefarious trade from year to year without a frown, who is convinced by the death of the prince that the law is to have its complete dominion, and that all future counterfeiters shall die? Instead of awing transgressors, his death has thrown the reins upon their neck and completely ruined the law.

Thus whatever respect the atonement might have to the elect as destined to be receivers of sanctifying impressions, it could not break the relation to condemnation which they as agents sustained, and pronounce them acquitted, until (if adults) they had believed. It was not therefore reconciliation, provided a complete atonement for Paul existed before Paul believed.

II. Nor does the atonement contain the influence which secures reconciliation. As it could not justify unbelievers, it had no way to secure reconciliation but by insuring the gift of faith. And this is what is generally ascribed to it by those who talk of its reconciling power. The great question then is, does the atonement by its own proper influence secure the gift of faith?

This at once calls upon us to decide what the atonement is, and how much of the influence of Christ falls under this name. Our own opinion is, that the name is applicable only to that which answered the end of punishment, by showing the universe that God would support his law by executing its penalty on transgressors; which thus secured the authority of the law and satisfied its Protector, and besides removing the curse of abandonment, reconciled with the honor of the law the pardon of believers (whether of all indiscriminately who would believe, or of those only who it was foreseen would believe); which thus removed the legal impediments to the acquittal of believers, and rendered their sins pardonable, and so became the ground of pardon. Such an influence, separated from that which secures the gift of faith, was to Paul before his conversion (aside from its bearing on his regeneration by removing the curse of abandonment), nothing but a provision for a moral agent, presenting to him a ground on which he might be pardoned if he would believe, and taking away the penal bar to his continued sanctification, but having no power to secure the gift of faith. Standing by itself, it had simply

changed his relations as an agent, and as it bore on pardon, had merely rendered his sins pardonable if he would perform his duty, and pardonable on no other terms. And after his conversion, it was such a provision applied, and became the ground on which a sinning agent was pardoned, and so far as related to the curse of abandonment, the ground on which he continued to be sanctified.*

Here, then, is a mighty change wrought in the relations of moral agents (whether of a part or the whole of mankind I am not now inquiring), distinct from every thing relating to the same creatures as mere passive subjects of regeneration. The influence which produced this change was certainly distinct from that which related to mere recipients of regenerating power, though both should be allowed to have existed in the same thing. Now what shall we call this influence? It is so distinguishable in its effects, and at the same time so important, that it deserves a separate name, and ought not to be lost in general appellations. What name shall we give it? Is it not in fact the cover for sin? Then we must call it the atonement. And then the atonement is that which changes the relations of moral agents in reference to a release from the curse, and not that which procures the positive gift of the Spirit to passive recipients.

This is our idea of the atonement: but whether it is correct or not depends on the question whether the atonement contains that influence which secures the gift of faith. In this and the foregoing chapters I have been separating and shaping materials for the decision of this question. Let us see to what they amount.

We have found that the atonement is the cover for sin, by which is meant that it hides or is adapted to hide sin so from view that it will not be punished; that, therefore, it came in the room of punishment and answered the same end, or was adapted to come in the room of punishment and to answer the same end; that that end was to support the law by convincing the universe that God would punish transgression; that the means of this conviction were the sufferings of the beloved Son inflicted by the Father's hand, which therefore constituted the matter of the atonement; that when the end of punishment was thus answered, the Protector of the law was satisfied, and the legal impediments to par-

* The removal of the curse of abandonment, though even as it bore on regeneration it took away what agents had caused, was no part of a provision for agents but as it removed the penal bar to the gift of the Spirit on their doing their duty. A provision for agents is not that which undoes what agents have done, but that which agents may improve, and the effects of which depend on their improvement as a *sine qua non*. This removal, as it took away the penal bar to the regeneration of Paul, was not a provision for an agent; as it removed the penal bar to the gift of the Spirit on his faithfully seeking it, it was.

don were removed ; that the result of this was that the sins of believers, and of none else, were pardonable, and God could forgive them without injuring the law, but was not obliged till another influence, a promise made to the obedience of Christ, had created the bond ; that atonement is distinguishable from its covenanted acceptance, it being that which came from the Son and satisfied the Father, and not the security given by the Father to the Son that believers should be pardoned on that ground ; that this ground on which men might be pardoned, viewed as already believing, could not be the influence which secures the gift of faith ; that the atonement therefore, separate from its covenanted acceptance, was, in relation to those for whom it was made, a mere provision in the hands of the Father for moral agents, rendering it possible for him to pardon them when they should believe ; and that its covenanted acceptance merely placed that provision for moral agents in the hands of Christ, by securing to him the pardon, on that ground, of all who would believe. Besides this connected chain whose links seem indissoluble, we have found that an entirely different influence, constituted not by sufferings, not by any thing which answered in the room of punishment, not by any thing which is the ground of pardon, but by the merit of obedience, and consisting in a claim to a reward, obtained the gift of faith for the elect.

Not only are we led to this conclusion by the general chain, but there is something in almost every link which indicates the same thing.

(1) The measure in question is an atonement. From the accepted use of its English name I draw an argument. To atone, is to make amends for an offence, that the offender may be pardoned as he is, or is capable of being, not that the appeased may fit him for pardon.

(2) The measure is a cover for sin : but what has a cover for sin to do with securing the gift of faith ? Where no sin exists God is not obliged to sanctify, unless he has bound himself by covenant. When no sin existed in heaven or Eden, he ceased to sanctify, because he had promised to continue his influence. When sin was actually covered, so far as it bore on the question of sanctification, that is, when the penalty of abandonment was taken wholly away, he was under no obligation to bestow the gift of faith. One hinderance to sanctification was thus removed, but no obligation to sanctify was created. And this is not all. The mere cover for sin could not even render the gift of faith consistent with the honor of the law. Something more than the absence of sin was required of Adam, after he had entered upon existence, to render the exertion of sanctifying influence upon his heart consistent with the honor of the law. He must have a positive righteousness, perfect for the time he had been in existence, and the influence must be a token that he was thus far ap-

proved; for the moment he ceased to be approved, the law forbid the influence to be continued. After his probation, had he remained faithful, the influence would have been for ever granted to him and his seed as the reward of a perfect righteousness. And the honor of the law required that it should not be bestowed in any other way. The same principle still exists; and as men have not a perfect obedience to show, even after the sin of disobedience is covered (including all the disobedience of omission itself), they can never be sanctified but as the reward of Christ. After sin is covered a defect remains, not caused by sin or the presence of positive evil, but by the absence of positive good; and that defect the righteousness of Christ must supply. The mere cover for sin, therefore, so far from securing the gift of faith, could not even render it consistent with the honor of the law. It could only remove the penal bar which stood in the way.

It is equally evident that a cover for sin could only affect the relations of moral agents. If it covers sin, it only covers what an agent has done; for the passive have not sinned. If its whole effect and tendency is to cover sin, it stretches itself over none but agents, and exhausts all its virtue upon their relations. If it had respect to the relation which sinners bore to the law,—if its tendency was to free from condemnation and punishment in a way not injurious to the law, its whole aspect was upon agents; for none but agents bore any relation to law, condemnation, punishment, or pardon. No relations but those of agents could possibly be affected by a cover for sin, except so far as the penalty of abandonment, which agents had incurred, excluded impressions from the passive. But even this indirect effect on the passive was produced by changing the relations of agents, by removing a penal bar which they had raised against themselves.

The cover for sin, then, could touch none but agents. It produced all its effects by changing their relations. Of course it was designed for no other purpose. We know from the shape of the garment for whom it was intended. It was never provided for men as passive, but for men as active. And now if the atonement is that cover, it was never offered or accepted for mere recipients of sanctifying impressions, but for moral agents; not for men as active and passive both; not at once to render their sins pardonable and to obtain for them the gift of faith; but merely to be the ground of their release from both parts of the curse. Be the number for whom it was offered greater or less, it was offered for them only as agents, to take away the penalty of abandonment which they as agents had incurred, and to render pardonable the sins which they as agents had committed. To this I add, that it was offered and accepted with an express understanding that it should be applied to them for par-

don only when as agents they should believe; and thus the enjoyment of it was not secured to them as passive and motionless, but was suspended on their own act as a *sine qua non*, an act which they were in duty bound to perform. The only operation which it had on the elect themselves, besides removing the penalty of abandonment, was to render their pardon consistent with the honor of the law when they as agents should perform a reasonable duty by believing. And this makes it out to be neither more nor less (as it related to pardon), than a provision for moral agents. No matter if by another influence that effort of their agency was secured; the atonement itself, so long as the enjoyment of it depended on their own conduct, was a mere provision for moral agents.

(3) The atonement, as it stood related to pardon, was adapted to come in the room of punishment and to answer the same end; and besides removing the curse of abandonment, it had no other use.* But it could not answer the end of the punishment of a man viewed otherwise than as already a believer. Faith must exist, then, before it could accomplish any part of what it was adapted to accomplish in relation to pardon. It was no part of its office therefore to secure the existence of faith.

No substitute whatever could answer the end of the punishment of continued transgressors. This end is to show that God will punish sin, and to avoid the evil of shielding continued transgression. But no substitute, by protecting Judas in his mad career, could convince the universe that God would punish sin, or prevent the evil of shielding continued transgression, but would accomplish the very thing it was guarding against. There would have been an end to be answered by the punishment of men (besides a literal exercise of justice), had they repented and no atonement had been provided for them; and that would have been to support the authority of the law by showing that God would punish sin. That end of the punishment of the penitent and reformed, the atonement can answer. But there is another end to be accomplished by punishing obdurate transgressors; and that is to avoid casting a shield over those who continue to trample the law in the dust. This end no atonement can answer so as to supply the place of the punishment of such; for the moment it attempts to do this, it accomplishes the very evil it was intended to prevent. All that an atonement could do that was to answer exactly the end of punishment, was to answer the end of the punishment of a sinner already reformed. It could have no influence therefore to reform him. As certainly, then, as the cover for sin (the ground of acquittal from

* I use punishment here for that part of the threatened evil which is set aside by pardon. The curse of abandonment was really a part of punishment; but for want of another term, and to avoid circumlocution, I am obliged to use the word here in this restricted sense.

the curse), besides removing the penalty of abandonment, could do no more than answer the end of punishment, the atonement could not secure the gift of faith. And its being adapted to answer the purpose of the punishment of a man whenever he will believe, constitutes it in relation to him a provision for a moral agent.

But the theory which assigns to the atonement a power to obtain sanctifying grace, wanders out of the way and draws in an influence which, instead of answering the end of punishment (for the merit of one, we have seen, cannot answer the end of the punishment of another), lays claim to a reward. That merit by which faith is obtained, can in no degree come in the room of punishment and help to constitute a provision for moral agents in relation to pardon.

(4) The atonement was made by sufferings, or at most by sufferings combined with the testimony of obedience: but what influence have sufferings, or sufferings and testimony united, detached from the merit which claims a reward, to obtain the gift of faith? Or to look at the thing more generally, how can suffering for another what he deserves to suffer, make him holy? To intercept a stroke aimed at another, may ward it off from him, but what has that to do with changing his heart?

(5) The atonement removed the legal impediments to pardon. But this position, which will be allowed to describe the proper office of the atonement, does not carry the idea that it removed the bar which unbelief raises, but the obstructions which past sins have caused and which faith cannot put away; not those which arise from rejecting the gospel, but those which have arisen from breaking the law. I shall show presently that this was all that the כִּפּוּר of the Old Testament accomplished.

The influence which removes the legal impediments to pardon is identically that which is the ground of pardon, and becomes the ground merely by removing the impediments. But the merit which secures the gift of faith does not, as we have seen, answer the end of punishment so as to become the ground of pardon. Nor does the claim which it supports on God for a gift, render pardon consistent with the honor of the law. The gift itself is no part of the ground of remission. In the public instrument of the covenant of grace, the exercise of faith is made the condition of pardon; but even that is not the ground: much less is the gift of faith, and still less can a claim to that gift, or the merit which supports the claim, be that ground.

If, then, the atonement is that which removes the legal impediments to pardon, and thus becomes the ground of remission, it is entirely distinct from the influence which secures the gift of faith.

(6) The atonement is that which satisfies God as Protector of the authority of the law. In that character (and in that only can the satis-

faction be predicated of him), he was satisfied when the end of the punishment of believers (and of men in no other character can it be said), was so answered that the law was safe though they were pardoned. That satisfaction of course had nothing to do with making believers. It was the state of finding the sufferings to have answered the end of the punishment of men (whether applicable to the whole or a part), viewed as already believing, or the state of finding the sins of believers pardonable. That satisfaction certainly was not produced by any merit supporting a claim on the Father for an influence to make believers, for they are already believers. Besides, to establish a claim against a person, is a strange way to satisfy him for an offence. To oblige another to satisfy me, is not to satisfy him. It was not merit, as we have seen, which reconciled remission with the honor of the law; and certainly it was not a claim to the gift of faith which rendered the sins of believers pardonable. Nor could it result from that satisfaction, in itself considered, that faith would ever be bestowed. Because the sins of believers were pardonable, it did not follow that God was bound to make men believe. And that which so secured the law as to make the sins of believers pardonable, fully satisfied the Protector of the law. If the law was safe he had gained his point, and had not to wait for a claim to be established against himself before he could be satisfied. He was satisfied in the security of his law if never called upon to bestow a gift on men. And that relation of things which satisfaction implied, was complete though none were ever to believe; for though none ever believed, it would still be true that believers might be pardoned without injuring the law.

If, then, atonement was the influence which satisfied the Protector of the law, and rendered the sins of believers pardonable, it was not atonement which secured the gift of faith.

(7) The gift of faith to the elect was Christ's reward, conferred for the merit of his obedience "unto death," that is, for making atonement. There is a distinction to be set up between the atonement and the reward for making atonement, no less clear than between a day's work and its wages. And there is an equal distinction to be drawn between the influence of the atonement and the claim to the reward, no less obvious than between the influence of a physician upon his patient and his title to a fee. Atonement exerted its influence upon God's law, and spread itself as a covering over sinning agents; the claim of Christ exerted itself upon God's promise, and stood related to passive receivers of sanctifying impressions. The influence of the atonement was a cover which men might carry home with them, and wrap around them; the claim of Christ remained in himself, and could not be transferred. The

influence of the atonement upon the elect themselves (allowing them to have been the only objects), was distinct from the claim of Christ to their renewal and consequent salvation.

But you say, all this is not what we mean. We admit that the influence which secures the gift of faith is no part of that which answered the end of punishment, which removed the legal impediments to pardon, which satisfied the Protector of the law in relation to the remission of sins, which is the ground of pardon, which spent itself on the relations of moral agents, and constituted a provision for them. All this we admit, has nothing to do with the actual gift of faith. But then the cover of sin cannot accomplish its end till sin is covered or pardoned; and it cannot secure pardon unless it obtains the gift of faith. We must, therefore, give the word a wider meaning, and apply it to a sufficient part of Christ's influence to secure that gift. But where, I ask, is the authority for this? Not in the name; for that, we have seen, cannot decide whether the thing is the cover of sin, or only a cover for sin. Where, then, is the proof that atonement, by its own separate influence, secures actual pardon? You say, "The Hebrew word for atonement signifies to cover; and when sins in the Old Testament are spoken of as atoned, the meaning always is that they were covered, removed, never to be charged on the person who committed them. A transaction which only renders it possible for sin to be pardoned is no atonement, whatever else it may be."*

This is a point not to be passed over without a distinct examination. Every one acquainted with the Hebrew language knows that the same word runs into different meanings, preserving some general analogy to the original one, but going off through several gradations until resemblance is almost lost; and that two or more branches of meaning sometimes start from the same root, subdividing into other ramifications. The radical meaning of כפר, the Hebrew word for atonement, is to cover. From this root several branches proceed, one of which relates to atonement. I will exhibit three uses of the word, and leave it to the reader to judge whether they belong to the same branch.

I. It is used in its primary sense, and without any express reference to the typical expiations. Thus it signifies to cover or blot out a covenant, Isa. 28: 18; to cover or blot out sin by pardon, Deut. 21: 8. 2 Chron. 30: 18. Ps. 65: 3. 78: 38. 79: 9. Prov. 16: 6. Isa. 6: 7. 22: 14. 27: 9. Jer. 18: 23. And hence it is used for a disposition to

* A manuscript which has been transcribed by many hands and widely circulated, must be considered so far published as to be the proper subject of remark, and liable to be quoted, though without a reference or a name. This is my vindication for those quotations through the book which acknowledge no author.

pardon, a merciful temper and conduct towards offenders, Deut. 21 : 8 ; and hence for a reconciled state of feeling, Ezek. 16 : 63. Is it certain that either of these uses of the word has any reference to the application of the same word to the typical expiations ? Supposing the English name for atonement was cover, and you should read, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," would you certainly infer that the term in this verse was derived from the name of the atonement, or had any reference to it ? If not, the above uses of the word throw no light on the meaning of כִּפָּר when applied to the atonement.

II. It is used in two senses (evidently borrowed from the expiations, but applied to other matters), for a means or operation effectual or ineffectual as the case might be.

(1) The general idea suggested by those expiations was that of life offered for life that the latter life might be preserved. Whether, that the life might be preserved absolutely, or only that there might be a provision to preserve it, to take effect upon certain conditions, was of no importance as respected the general character of the transactions. In either way there was life offered for life that life might be preserved. This was enough (whichever way it was) to give currency to the use of the word for whatever was offered to God or man in lieu of life, whether absolutely or otherwise ; for it was not the absoluteness or conditionality of the offerings which connected them with the word, but their being in one way or other offered for life. Hence the word is used to denote a ransom given in the room of life to cover or shield life ; and sometimes, where human qualifications were not necessary, or were supposed to exist, the ransom is contemplated as taking absolute effect ; Ex. 30 : 2, 15, 16. Prov. 13 : 8. 21 : 18. Isa. 43 : 3. In other instances it is supposed to be frustrated through some imperfection in the character or state of him for whom it was offered. Job 36 : 18. Ps. 49 : 7. Prov. 6 : 35.

(2) The general idea suggested by those expiations was that of appeasing wrath. Whether they reconciled absolutely, or were only a provision for reconciliation, applicable where the offender was duly prepared, was of no importance as respected the general character of the transactions. In either way there was a design or tendency to appease wrath. This was enough (whichever way it was) to bring the word into use in the common affairs of life to express what is meant by the English term *appease*. Gen. 32 : 20. Prov. 16 : 14.

III. It is used to denote the ceremonial expiations themselves. These expiations were effectual in two, and only two, cases : (1) where no faith was required or was possible, as in those instances where inani-

mate things were ceremonially purged, Lev. 16: 20; Num. 35: 33. Ezek. 43: 20, 26. 45: 20; (2) where faith existed, or was supposed by the temporal Head of that nation to exist. I. the case of individuals, the very act of offering was a profession of faith, and set forth, not so much the abstract power of the atonement, as a Christian's approach to God through a Mediator, and the success that would follow. When a Hebrew brought his lamb to the priest to be offered for his sins, it answered to a Christian's bearing Christ in the arms of his faith to God, and saying, Here is my Lamb for a burnt-offering. And that reconciliation will follow such an act, is what no one denies. In regard to those general atonements for the whole congregation which may be supposed to have turned away temporal judgments, let it be remembered that they were offered for a nation of professed believers. And if those pictures of the real atonement could turn away temporal wrath from the visible church, it only taught us that the atonement itself will turn away eternal wrath from true believers. Not only a general profession of faith, but special humiliation must combine with those national expiations to give them any effect. The great day of atonement was always a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer; and without these accompaniments it would have been of no validity. Lev. 23: 27.

Thus where a real or visible faith existed, the ceremonial expiations had a correspondent effect: but did they always accomplish reconciliation? What means then that oath, "I have sworn unto the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever?" 1 Sam. 3: 14. Could they ever avail without the coöperation of a visible faith? What mean, then, those terrible reproofs: "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds." "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. Who hath required this at your hands? Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them?" Ps. l. Isa. i. And how came it to pass that these expiations did not reconcile the Scribes and Pharisees?

Certainly, then, the ceremonial expiations accomplished nothing but where faith was impossible and not required, or where it was supposed to exist. Or if they took a man from a state of condemnation and reconciled him to God, they surely obtained for him the gift of faith. The great and decisive question then is, did the כפר of the Old Testament

obtain the gift of faith? It certainly did not. Here I plant my foot. Show me a single instance in which these expiations were made with any such intent. Where is the chapter and verse? They were never offered to procure holiness, but only to obtain pardon. So far from being designed to insure faith, they always supposed its existence, and had no effect where it was not.

And now see how the argument from the Old Testament is shaped. Because the כִּפּוּר of that dispensation reconciled where faith was not necessary or possible, or where it was supposed to exist, the atonement must reconcile even where it has to bring faith with it for the purpose. And for this end a power must be given it to obtain faith, though it never had that power in one of the instances recorded in the Old Testament, and though neither the gift of faith naturally follows a cover for sin, nor can merit, by which the gift is obtained, constitute that cover by answering the end of punishment. No, the whole analogy of the Old Testament lies against this conclusion. If then you apply the name of atonement to that part of Christ's influence which secures the gift of faith, you contradict all the instances in which the term is used in the Bible.*

The conclusion is, that the atonement neither insures faith by its own proper influence, nor accomplishes reconciliation without it.

The great mistake on this subject has arisen from confounding the different influences which meet in the death of Christ. That death, including the consent of the Sufferer, is to be viewed in two lights; as an atoning sacrifice, and as the highest act of obedience. And yet the merit of that obedience, as constituting a claim to a reward, is confounded by the writers on the other side with the atonement. And then they raise the question, whether the death of Christ obtained the gift of faith for the elect, and thus accomplished actual reconciliation. We fully acknowledge that it did; and thus the dispute ends. But when we say this we do not make the same acknowledgment respecting the atonement. The merit of Christ's obedience "unto death" certainly obtained the gift of faith, and in union with his expiation, accomplished reconciliation for the elect; but merit made no part of the atonement.

Dr. Owen, and other writers on that side, constantly bring up the question about the death and ransom of Christ, and whether redemption was universal. We certainly have no dispute with them on this point. Says Dr. Owen, "Redemption, which in the Scripture is *λυτρωσις* sometimes, but most frequently *απολυτρωσις*, is the delivery of any one from captivity and misery by the intervention (*λυτρον*) of a price or ransom. That this ransom or price of our deliverance was the blood of Christ, is

* The word in Rom. 5 : 11, is not Bible but translation.

evident. He calls it *λυτρον*, Matt. 20 : 28, and *αντιλυτρον*, 1 Tim. 2 : 6, that is, the price of such redemption.*

I have no objection to all this, except a small inaccuracy in the last sentence. Nothing is said in the texts referred to about the blood of Christ. I admit, however, that redemption, in the larger sense, is our deliverance from the bondage both of sin and death; that it was accomplished by the larger ransom; and that this ransom is sometimes called the blood of Christ. But *λυτρον*, when used for the larger ransom, expresses more than כֶּפֶר did when standing for atonement.† It occurs nowhere but in the above-quoted text, and in the parallel one in Mark: "The Son of Man came — to give his life a ransom for many." *αντιλυτρον* occurs nowhere but in the passage above referred to. "Who gave himself a ransom for all." But the kindred words are of more frequent occurrence. *λυτρωσις* appears thrice: "He hath visited and made redemption for his people." "All them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Luke 1 : 68. 2 : 38. Heb. 9 : 12. *απολυτρωσις* occurs ten times. It is used to denote redemption from Jewish persecution, from the pains of martyrdom, from the grave, and from all evil at the last day: Luke 21 : 28. Rom. 8 : 23. Eph. 1 : 14. 4 : 30. Heb. 11 : 35. The other passages are as follows: "Justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." "By means of death for the redemption of — transgressions." Rom. 3 : 24. 1 Cor. 1 : 30. Eph. 1 : 7. Col. 1 : 14. Heb. 9 : 15. The corresponding verb carries the idea to a redemption from the power of sin, which כֶּפֶר never expressed: "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem (ransom, *λυτρωσεται*) us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed (ransomed, *ελυτρωθητε*) with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who — was manifest in these last times for you

* *Salus Electorum*, p. 174. Falkirk Ed.

† כֶּפֶר, when meaning a ransom, is translated *λυτρον* by the LXX. (Exod. 21 : 30. 30 : 12. Num. 35 : 31, 32. Prov. 6 : 35. 13 : 8). But this Greek word, like the corresponding English term, expresses a price which may either be absolute or conditional. There is nothing in it to limit it to the absolute sense; and we shall see that this and other words of a similar nature are used in a lower and conditional sense in the New Testament.

who by him do believe in God." Tit. 2: 14. 1 Pet. 1: 18-21. The same idea is brought out where the *λυτρον* or ransom is not expressed: "Who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world." "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." "For their sakes I sanctify myself [*dévôte* myself to die], that they also might be sanctified through the truth." John 17: 19. Gal. 1: 4. Eph. 5: 25-27. Thus by his obedience "unto death" he obtained a right and claim to deliver the elect from the bondage of sin by sanctifying grace. Hence it is said to Christians, "Ye are bought with a price;" (*τιμης ηγορασθητε*). And their song in heaven is, "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed (bought, *ηγορασας*) us to God with thy blood." "And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed (*οι ηγορασμενοι*) from the earth. These were redeemed (*ηγορασθησαν*) from among men." 1 Cor. 6: 20. 7: 23. Rev. 5: 9. 14: 3, 4. Another word is used in the same sense. "The church of God which he hath purchased (*περιποιωσατο*) with his own blood." "Ye are a chosen generation,—a people for a purchase" (*λαος εις περιποιωσιν*); meaning, says Parkhurst, "a people acquired or purchased to himself in a peculiar manner." Acts 20: 28. 1 Pet. 2: 9. When, therefore, you contemplate the death of Christ as a whole, including both expiation and the merit of obedience, it did reconcile the elect to God. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and (having made peace through the blood of his cross), by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unprovable in his sight." *

* Col. 1: 19-22. Reconciliation is never ascribed to a less cause than the death of Christ as a whole; and it means, I think, the mere destruction of enmity between the parties, without reference to any thing positive, except as a necessary consequence. This noun and its kindred verb are used in our translation of the New Testament fourteen times. In one instance (Rom. 5: 11), the noun ought to have appeared where atonement is used; and in one instance (Heb. 2: 17), the verb appears where to atone ought to have been used. Fourteen times, then, these words ought to have appeared, and fourteen times, and no more, the corresponding Greek words are found in the New Testament. In six places *καταλλασσω* is used (Rom. 5: 10, twice. 1 Cor. 7: 11. 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19, 20); in four, its derivative noun *καταλλαγη* (Rom. 5: 11. 11: 15. 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19); in three, *αποκαταλλασσω* (Eph. 2: 16. Col. 1: 20, 21); and in one, *δαιλλασσω* (Matt. 5: 24); all derived from *αλλασσω*,

We can now understand what is meant by the larger ransom. By giving himself, devoting himself to die, and actively laying down his blood, Christ obtained as firm a claim to the redemption of his elect from the bondage of sin (and so from that of death through his expiation), as a man could have to the release of captives, who had paid by contract a mighty ransom for their redemption; while the blood laid down was that out of respect to which, as the honor of the law was concerned, the Father consented to their release. These two parts were sufficient to constitute a complete *λυτρον*. A ransom has two influences; it supports the claim of the redeemer, and it is that out of respect to which the holder of the captives lets them go. Let the ransom of Christ possess this double influence, and it comprehends in its matter all that was active and passive in his voluntary death, and in its power, not only the whole efficiency of the atonement, but his entire claim to that reward which consisted in the release of the captives from both parts of their bondage, or his perfect right to sanctify and lead them forth from punishment. The part of the ransom which supported his claim, was the giving or sanctifying of himself, as it is expressed four times in the above quotations; but the part which the Father respected as the ground of the release, was the blood and life laid down. Thus he actively "gave himself

which signifies to change. The cause to which the effect is ascribed, appears only in the following passages: "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom. 5: 10); "It pleased the Father—(having made peace through the blood of his cross), by him to reconcile all things unto himself. And you—hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death" (Col. 1: 19–22); "That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross" (Eph. 2: 16). The meaning of the word seems limited to the destruction of enmity between the parties in the following passages: "Go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother" (Matt. 5: 24); "Let her—be reconciled to her husband" (1 Cor. 7: 11); "In Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace who hath made both [Jews and Gentiles] one,—having abolished in his flesh the enmity,—to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace" (Eph. 2: 13–17); "It pleased the Father—(having made peace by the blood of his cross), by him to reconcile all things unto himself. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind,—hath he reconciled" (Col. 1: 19–21); "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us; much more, then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved [from wrath] by his life" (Rom. 5: 8–10); "Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then—we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5: 18–20).

for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity," but "redeemed us from the curse of the law [by] being made [passively] a curse for us." Gal. 3: 13. Tit. 2: 14.

The lower ransom was the blood of Christ laid down for a moral agent, to deliver him from death if he on his part would accept the offer. "I exhort — that — supplications — be made for all men; — for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth: for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom (*αντιλυτρον*) for all." 1 Tim. 2: 1-6. "Even denying the Lord that bought (*αγορασαντα*) them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." 2 Pet. 2: 1. The latter word is the same that expresses the purchase of believers in the following passages: "Ye are bought with a price." "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God with thy blood." "The hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth." The higher ransom, then, is that which effects deliverance from sin and death; the lower ransom is the means of deliverance, dependent for its effect on the conduct of men. The higher ransom comprehends both expiation and merit; the lower ransom is nothing but the atonement. In this lower sense redemption was as general as the means, and might be accepted or refused. Heb. 11: 35.

But how, if the whole claim of Christ rested on the merit of his obedience, did he purchase the church with his "blood?" And how are we "redeemed" from our "vain conversation — with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot?" This will appear to be a very natural figure (for "purchased" is certainly figurative), when we consider in how many respects the blood resembled a pecuniary price. It was the thing laid down upon the board. It was the very thing which he was commanded to lay down, with a promise that if he would lay down that precise thing he should have a redeemed seed; and by laying it down he purchased them. What gave it a greater resemblance to a pecuniary price, the thing laid down, was really useful to the government of the other party. And there was a reason for calling it "precious," with an implied comparison with other prices of less value. The self-denial, which as the test of obedience really created the claim, was in proportion to the thing laid down, just as it is in proportion to the sum of money paid in a purchase. Compared, then, with other tests of obedience, the blood supported a greater claim, as of a thing more precious; and by its claim and self-denial united, it resembled a vast treasure paid to purchase some valuable good. It had another point of resemblance. A price has no claim till it is accepted; and the blood of Christ

had no claim separate from that covenanted acceptance which the merit of his obedience procured. That merit in reality created the whole claim, but it did it by laying down that blood. Here lies the difference from an ordinary purchase. In the latter case the money, abstracted from the character of him who offers it, and from all merit in laying it down, commands the article. In the other case the blood, abstracted from the merit of obedience, obtains nothing. This discrepancy must be admitted upon every plan; for who will say that the blood alone, separated from the obedience which attended it, obtained the sanctification and pardon of the elect? The blood, though it went into the larger ransom as the ground of the release, really had nothing to do with the claim but as the mere test of obedience.

The only difficulty arises from our being said to be redeemed from the power of sin by the blood of the unblemished Lamb. Here, you say, obedience is distinctly referred to, but as having no other power than to qualify the Victim. And the inference is, that the atonement itself secured the gift of faith. We have already contemplated the active form of this expression (namely, that Christ purchased the church with his own blood), and found no difficulty in it; and if it had been added, with his own spotless blood, it would have created no more difficulty; for that was certainly understood. Christ purchased the church and redeemed it from iniquity with his own spotless blood, as of a lamb without blemish. We see how by a slight figure this could be said in perfect consistency with our system. Now Peter only leaves out the Purchaser, and throws the sentence into a passive form, and with these two alterations expresses the same thing. "Ye were — redeemed — from your vain conversation — with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish." Who was the Redeemer? Introduce his agency so as to give the sentence an active form, and how will it read? Christ hath redeemed you from your vain conversation with his own precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish. And this is just what we had before. Peter did not intend to deny the influence of Christ's merit in this redemption; but using a passive form, he had no way to bring it in. Had he expressed the same idea in an active form, he might have said, Christ, by obediently yielding his spotless life, claimed and accomplished the sanctification of his elect, and obtained this reward and influence by giving "himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."

As in this place the whole seems to be ascribed to the passion of the unblemished Lamb, so in the 10th of Hebrews every thing seems imputed to the action of the Priest; and while we are contemplating the Priest, he at once becomes a King (ver. 13). It could not be

expected that the apostles would preserve all the nice classifications of systematic writers. Their business was with the multitude, and they often throw the subject upon the imagination and heart in a rich and affecting confusion. It is not from such insulated passages that we are to gather systems. We must compare Scripture with Scripture, and build ourselves upon the analogy of faith.

Thus if you confound the influences which meet in the death of Christ, and ask what that death accomplished, we answer, reconciliation for the elect. If you ask about the higher ransom, that redeemed all for whom it was offered. But if you ask about the atonement or lower ransom, that, even viewed as accepted of God, did no more for the elect themselves than to remove the curse of abandonment, and to render it certain that they would be pardoned if they would believe; making out thus, as relates to pardon, a mere provision for moral agents. This must be the limit of the atonement if it did not secure the gift of faith.

Whether it was in fact an atonement for all (intentionally or otherwise), depends, therefore, on the question, whether it had these two effects upon all. But for this question we are not yet prepared.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MEANING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AS CONNECTED WITH THE JUSTIFICATION OF BELIEVERS.

THE original and literal meaning of righteousness is perfect personal holiness. Used in reference to the subject about which we are inquiring, it means neither more nor less than that which gives a title to justification, not of debt, but according to God's gracious covenant, to the utter exclusion of boasting. Sometimes the term seems to denote that which is the condition of justification, but more generally that which is the ground. The manner in which the word slid into this use is obvious. Under the first covenant both the condition and ground of justification were a literal righteousness, or unsullied holiness. That was the natural mode of justification; and in that process the term justification was used in its original and literal meaning, to denote a legal sentence that the person respected was just. Hence it became a familiar truth that a righteousness was necessary to justification, and bore to it the relations both of a condition and a ground. When the new method of accepting men was introduced, it was natural to refer to the former method as the

standard, and to borrow its terms. The acceptance itself, though far from being legal, was called justification; and to preserve consistency, that which is the ground of acceptance (and I think, also, that which is the condition), was called a righteousness. The terms thus applied are plainly used out of their original meaning; for the gracious acceptance of a sinner is certainly not a legal process. The justification is not by works of the law, and of course the righteousness which gives a title to it is not a legal righteousness.

In this way it has come to pass that whatever under the new covenant gives a title to a gracious justification, is called our righteousness, and the man who possesses it is denominated righteous. That this is the case the following passages will show.

"Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness;—in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified." Isa. 45: 24, 25.

"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.—But now the righteousness of God [of God's ordaining], without the law, is manifested,—even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.—Being justified freely by his grace.—Where is boasting then?—Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.—If Abraham were justified by works he hath whereof to glory.—But what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works; saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. [To impute righteousness, then, is not to impute sin, or, in plain words, to forgive.]—We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness;—and he received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith,—that he might be the father of all them that believe,—that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.—For the promise—was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.—It is of faith that it might be by grace.—It was imputed to him for righteousness: now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.—As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners [were condemned], so by the

obedience of One shall many be made righteous [shall possess that which entitles them to justification: this is the sole idea, and makes the antithesis complete].—To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness [unto that which secures justification of life, as the antithesis requires].—The Gentiles which followed not after righteousness [a course of conduct acceptable to God], have attained to righteousness [that which entitles to justification or acceptance with God], even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness [the law by which they hoped to be justified], hath not attained to the law of righteousness” [could not be justified by the law, or hath not attained to the rule or method of justification. Rom. 3: 20–28. iv. 5: 1, 19, and ver. 16. 9: 30, 31].

“A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ:—for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.—The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham.—That no man is justified by the law—is evident, for The just shall live by faith.—If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.—The law was our school-master to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.—Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law.—We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” Gal. 2: 16. 3: and 5: 4, 5.

“The Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” James 2: 23, 24.

The gospel is called “the word of righteousness,” and “the ministration of righteousness,” in opposition to “the ministration of condemnation,” because it reveals the ground and condition of justification. 2 Cor. 3: 9. Heb. 5: 13.

From these passages it plainly appears that by righteousness is meant nothing more than that which under the gracious covenant of God gives a title to justification; a title in no sense legal, by no means founded on justice, but purely of grace, to the utter exclusion of boasting; that to be “made righteous” by Christ, is only to be entitled by him to a gracious justification; that to impute, reckon, or account faith for righteousness, is to accept it in the room of a literal righteousness; that to impute righteousness to a man is not to impute sin, in plain words, to forgive, or in a larger sense to confer on him a title to a gracious reward; and

that to impute to one the righteousness of Christ, is merely to justify him, or treat him as righteous, on account of the righteousness of the Redeemer.

That this term was derived from the first covenant, and is used of course under the second in a figurative sense, appears more evident from its being used under the second, as under the first, to denote both the ground and condition of justification. It more generally expresses the ground, which is no other than the atonement and obedience of Christ. Isa. 42: 21. 45: 24, 25. 54: 17. 61: 10, 11. 62: 1, 2. Jer. 23: 6. 33: 16. Dan. 9: 24. Rom. 5: 21. 10: 3-11. 1 Cor. 1: 30. Phil. 3: 9. But if I mistake not, it sometimes denotes the condition, or that personal qualification which for the sake of Christ is graciously accepted in the room of a literal righteousness. The sincere, but imperfect obedience of Israel (in which, however, faith was unquestionably included), was denominated their righteousness. The zeal of Phinehas "was counted unto him for [in the room of] righteousness." Abraham "believed the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. 15: 6. Deut. 6: 25. 24: 13. Ps. 106: 31. It is several times repeated in the New Testament that Abraham's faith (a personal qualification) was reckoned to him for righteousness, instead of righteousness, or as being what a literal righteousness was under the first covenant, a condition of justification. Circumcision was "a seal of the righteousness of faith," or a seal of the promise that faith should be accounted *for* righteousness, or be accepted as the condition of justification.*

Thus it would seem that as under the first covenant both the ground and condition of justification were a literal righteousness, so under the second covenant the ground and condition of justification are figuratively called by the same name; not because they are the same thing (for then justification would be of debt and not of grace), but because they fill the same place in the matter of justification. On the whole, it seems undeniable that righteousness means neither more nor less than that which gives a complete title to justification "by grace." Of course to make one righteous through Christ, or to impute to him the righteousness of Christ, is to invest him, not with a personal claim on justice, but with a title to a free, gracious, unmerited justification through the righteousness of his Redeemer. It is to secure to him the privilege, not of being considered literally righteous (for he is not, and God views things as they are), but of being treated as righteous.

The strongest figure, I believe, in the Bible to countenance the idea

* If it should be thought that this opinion is not warranted by the passages quoted, I shall not contend for it, as it is not material to any part of the system. I see nothing, however, unnatural or dangerous in it: but the evidence is before the reader.

that believers have in Christ a literal righteousness, and a real claim on justice, is found in Rom. 8: 3, 4. "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." To understand this passage it is necessary to take up the connection of the whole Epistle. In the first five chapters the apostle had been supporting the doctrine of justification by faith, without the deeds of the law. In the last verse of the third chapter he had started the objection, "Do we then make void the law" as a rule of life? and had dismissed it with this brief reply, "God forbid! yea we establish the law." In the sixth chapter he resumes the objection, and shows that conformity to the law is necessarily implied in that union to Christ by which we are justified. In the seventh chapter he pursues the same general subject, and explains the end which the law subserves, and the relation which believers bear to it. The eighth chapter opens with an inference from these two subjects united, namely, justification by faith alone, and the necessity of holiness: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death [the gospel has delivered me both from the dominion and condemnation of sin]. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." As though he had said, all our past and present sins being covered by the atonement of Christ, and all the defect of our obedience by his obedience; and we being brought back to honor, love, and obey the law, or as he had said in another place, to "keep the righteousness of the law," and to "obedience unto righteousness," chap. 2: 26. 6: 16; it is, to all the purposes of honoring the law and completing our title to justification, as though the righteousness of the law, or a legal righteousness, had been fulfilled in us. No other can be the meaning; for it would contradict the plain argument of the whole Epistle to affirm that the best Christian on earth possesses a legal righteousness, or has in any way the righteousness of the law literally fulfilled in him. The expression is obviously figurative, like that in which the same apostle speaks of filling up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ — for — the Church."*

* Col. 1: 24. Some have a shorter way of getting over this text, affirming that by the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us, is meant no more than that we "keep the

But this is not the only figurative expression which has received a literal construction. Indeed the practice of confounding the figurative with the literal meaning is so fruitful a source of mistake that it deserves a particular consideration.

CHAPTER VII.

MISTAKES ARISING FROM DRAWING LITERAL CONCLUSIONS FROM FIGURATIVE PREMISES.

THERE are certain figurative expressions in common use in the church, partly derived from the Scriptures and partly of human

righteousness of the law." But the connection between the third and fourth verses seems to intimate that the atonement had something to do with this fulfilment of the righteousness of the law in us.

I have made no account of that well-known passage in the 85th Psalm, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" because there are reasons to doubt whether righteousness in this place means any thing more than faithfulness. Long before the days of David, "the righteous acts of the Lord," meant those dispensations of providence which manifested his mercy and truth. Judges 5: 11. 1 Sam. 12: 7. But in consequence of the more express and ample covenant engagements with David and his house, such terms are more frequently found in the Psalms, and generally mean the covenant mercy or faithfulness of God. Ps. 5: 8. 31: 1. 35: 24, 28. 36: 6, 10. 40: 9, 10. 51: 14. 71: 2, 15, 16, 19. 88: 12. 89: 16. 92: 15. 103: 17. 112: 4. 116: 5. 119: 40, 123, 142. 143: 1, 11. 145: 7. "God of my righteousness," appears to mean, "God of my mercy." Ps. 4: 1. 59: 10, 17. "Let them not come into thy righteousness," that is, into thy favor. Ps. 69: 27. "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only;" that is, of thy faithfulness. Ps. 71: 15, 16. The fruit of mercy is once expressed by the same term. Ps. 24: 5. After David's time, righteous and righteousness were often used in the same sense by other prophets, Ez. 9: 15. Isa. 41: 10. 42: 6. 46: 13. 56: 1. Dan. 9: 16. Mic. 7: 9; and the practice is followed even by the writers of the New Testament. John 7: 18. Rom. 3: 3-7. 2 Thes. 2: 10, 12. 2 Tim. 4: 8. Heb. 6: 10-20. 2 Pet. 1: 1. 1 John 1: 9. A fair specimen of this phraseology may be seen in the two following passages: "God [who, it is stated in the context, had bound himself by promise], is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." In the same spirit Paul says, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

This explanation of the passage receives considerable support from its structure. It is common in Hebrew poetry for the latter line of a distich to echo the sense of the former, with a small variation in the words or their order for the sake of euphony. On this principle righteousness in the latter line is of the same import with truth in the former, and exactly answers to the term faithfulness. "Mercy and truth are met together; faithfulness and peace have kissed each other."

invention, which are calculated to present to the imagination in a summary and striking manner, without the process of reasoning, the general influence of Christ's mediation. This advantage gives them (at least a part of them) a claim to be retained in our prayers and popular discourses. But the difficulty is that they have been introduced into logical discussions with a literal meaning, and as premises from which literal conclusions are drawn. This has been one of the most prolific sources of mistake.

The expressions are such as these: that Christ purchased the church, that he paid their debt, that he is one with them, that their sins were imputed to him, that he bore the curse of the law in their stead, that he satisfied divine justice for them, that his righteousness is imputed to them, and that they are considered righteous.

It is said in Scripture, "Ye are bought with a price;" and hence, as if ransom was used but in a single sense, it is inferred, "As is the ransom must be the release.—Were redemption universal, salvation would and must be of equal extent." * And as if the whole was a commercial transaction, it is alleged that just enough was paid in a way of atonement to redeem a certain number, and that this number can claim a release of justice itself. "If Christ fully paid the price of redemption for all and each, then all and each ought to be saved, and none ought to perish." †

Because Christ answered the purpose of our punishment, men have chosen to say that he paid our debt; and from that expression, manifestly figurative and of human invention, they have gone on to infer, as though the whole transaction was of a pecuniary nature, that he became the Bondsman of a certain number, and brought himself under obligations to law and justice to discharge their debt, and actually paid it in kind; and that they, as exonerated debtors, have a claim on justice to a release. "He paid the full debt of all for whom he was Surety, and he secures the eternal redemption of every one for whom he made the payment." "He did not undertake to see their debt paid and satisfaction made by some means or other, as bondsmen commonly bind themselves for their friends in joint securities in order to strengthen their credit, always presuming that these bonds will be discharged in whole or in the greatest part by the debtors themselves; no, he took the whole debt and the whole guilt of his lost sheep upon himself alone." "He that

* See a popular little book entitled *Gethsemane*, published first in London, and republished in Philadelphia, with high recommendations, in 1817 (containing extracts from many writers), p. 21.

† The delegates from Zealand in the Synod of Dort.—*Acts of Synod*, Part III. p. 156.

undertaketh for another man's debt maketh it his own, and standeth chargeable with it as if it were his own personal debt; so Christ, becoming Surety for our sins, made them his own, and so was punishable for them as if they had been his own personal sin." He "was held in the same obligation which we were under; he paid the same debt that we did owe; the curse or punishment which we deserved was inflicted upon him." "The grand question here is, for whom was Christ Surety? whose debt did he pay? whose freedom did he procure? Let the event declare this; for certainly Christ did not die in vain, or purchase deliverance and yet lose the price he paid, or any part of the purchase he made; for this would be contrary to all the rules of justice and righteousness." "His death had had no relation to us had not our sin been juridically adjudged to be his; nor can we challenge an acquittance at the hand of God for our debts, if they were not our debts that he paid on the cross." *

It is said in Scripture, "They two shall be one flesh: this is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Eph. 5: 31, 32. And hence it is inferred "that there is such an intercommunity of relation between the Saviour and his redeemed, as forms a just reason for regarding them as one in a federal and legal sense." "Another's act cannot be mine, either in profit or loss, if there be not a legal oneness between us." †

It is said in Scripture, "He hath made him to be sin for us." "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree." "And unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." And hence it is inferred that in the eye of law and justice he was actually a sinner by imputation, bearing upon him by a legal transfer all the sins of the elect, and no more; that he "took upon him their persons," "sustained our persons;" ‡ in short, that sin and its guilt were legally imputed, transferred, or transmitted to him, and not merely the effects of sin laid upon him. "Jehovah laid or caused to meet upon Christ the Surety, not the punishment only, but the iniquity of them all." "Had no guilt lain on him he might have suffered, but could not have been punished. — What is this being made sin? Is it Christ's being a sacrifice for sin? Yes; but that is not all; it notes also his being under the guilt of sin." "It is not the guilt of sin (as guilt means only our obnoxiousness to punishment), that was imputed to Jesus Christ. It seems not proper to speak so. But sin was imputed; and the result of that imputation was, guiltiness in the

* Gethsemane, p. 42, 55, 73, 91, 152.

† Ibid. p. 66, 80.

‡ Ibid. p. 49, 80.

eye of the law and vindictive justice." "Persons who are hostile to this doctrine tell us that it was not sin itself which was imputed to Christ, but the effects of sin. But — the apostle — is not speaking of the effects of sin, but of sin itself." "The transferring our iniquities upon him must in some way precede his being bruised for them, which could not be any other way than by imputation, whereby he was constituted by God a debtor in our stead to bear the punishment of our sin. He being made sin for us, our sin was in a sort made his." "Unto them that look for him, he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. — If the words have any meaning, surely there must have been a sense in which when on earth he was not without sin. — If these and similar expressions do not convey the idea of Christ's dying under a charge of imputed sin, and of his suffering the penalty connected with it, they have no meaning at all." He sustained "that curse or debt of suffering which attached to those on whose account he became a Surety, whose sins were imputed to him, and with which he became, by his infinitely gracious and voluntary consent, legally chargeable." "Their iniquity itself was laid upon him by God the Judge of all, and he was regarded by his holy Father as justly chargeable with all their iniquity, and transgression, and sin. — These were set to his account in law-reckoning, and laid upon him as their representative." *

It is said in Scripture, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" and hence it is inferred that he suffered a legal punishment, and was adjudged to it by law and justice; a punishment the same both in kind and degree that was due to all the sins of the elect; that had he atoned for another sin he must have suffered more; and that his death is not sufficient for the pardon of one of the non-elect. "The way in which Christ was to justify many was by bearing their iniquities; but if he did not endure by way of punishment all that these iniquities deserved, with what propriety can his bearing them be assigned as a ground of justification? Sin is sin wherever it is found, whether on the sinner himself or on his Substitute. Its being transmitted to the Substitute does not lessen its malignity, nor render punishment less necessary. The sanction of the divine law is irreversible; it will have its course. Punishment in either case is not an act of sovereignty, but of justice." "That the death of Christ was a death of unexampled sufferings cannot be doubted; but they were sufferings to which he became liable as a Surety, and to which, in virtue of his own voluntary engagement, he was righteously judged by the law and justice of God." "The sufferings of our blessed Lord were, in consequence of his own

* Geth. p. 19, 20, 55, 73, 109, 156, 157, 159, 160.

voluntary engagement, a debt due to divine justice." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; which he could not have been without the imputation of sin, and his enduring whatever was included in that curse." "If the sufferings of our Lord were not penal, there can be no salvation for apostate man. — What will these sufferings avail if there was nothing penal in them? Mere suffering gives a right to nothing; suffering to be expiatory must be voluntary, and endured as the desert of imputed sin." "Christ is said to be made a curse, not simply because he suffered, but because he was adjudged to his sufferings, that thereby satisfaction might be made to the justice of God. But if sin were not imputed to Christ, he could not be the object of punitive justice; for that is strange justice that can be satisfied by the sufferings of a person no way guilty in the eye of justice." "Either Christ suffered the wrath of God, i. e. the punishment due to the sins of the elect, or else God is untrue in that commination, He that sins shall die." "To imagine that sin can escape punishment, is highly dishonorable to the moral government of God. For as moral precepts are a transcript of the holiness and rectitude of the divine nature, it is impossible that the sanction by which infinite justice has guarded these precepts, should either be annulled or relaxed." "To me it appears self-evident, either that Christ must have sustained the punishment due to the sinner, or the law have relaxed in its demands." "If the curse of the divine law has not been borne by Christ, we are still in our sins, and the weight of that curse will sink us into endless perdition." "This satisfaction is, however, by some persons boldly denied; and in perfect consistency with this denial, it is said that our blessed Lord was not punished: for it is easy to see that if the doctrine of satisfaction be allowed, punishment must of course follow; for without punishment there can be no satisfaction either to the law or to the justice of God." "The chastisement of our peace was upon him. How else could his heavenly Father [have] been pleased to bruise him, for whom it is no more good to punish the just than to clear the guilty?" "If our iniquities were not laid upon Christ, his sufferings could not be punishment, and therefore not satisfactory: for where there is no sin, either actual, inherent, or imputed, there can be no punishment, and of course no expiation of guilt. It was no more possible for God to inflict penal sufferings on Christ while considered in every respect as perfectly innocent, than it was for him to deny himself." "It has been asked, may not God punish an innocent creature as so considered? — God cannot but approve and justify an innocent creature as so considered; because the innocent creature is what God wills him to be according to his law, and therefore it is impossible he should, under this consideration, be the object of his disapprobation. —

Hence it necessarily follows that an innocent creature, as so considered, cannot be impressed with a piercing sense of divine vengeance against sin. A perception the guiltless creature may have of the evil of sin, and of the wrath of God which sin demerits; — but this is not attended with any anguish or pain of mind; for it is only a sense of sin as charged or imputed, and of obnoxiousness to divine displeasure on that account, which can give the soul uneasiness and torture. Each of these things enter into the very nature of, and are essential to, divine punishment. Surely it is not to be thought that God approves of any whom he punishes, that is to say, as they are the subjects of his act of punishing; and it is impossible that a creature under the same consideration should be the object of divine condemnation and justification; for these are certainly inconsistent ideas if any such there be. Nor can God impress the mind of a creature with a painful sense of his wrath, who is not, under any consideration, the object of his displeasure.” “What God hates in man he cannot do himself. Nothing is the object of God’s displeasure but what is contrary to the divine nature. To punish the innocent is disapproved of God, because it is a dreadful violation of right and justice, and is therefore contrary to the essential righteousness and justice of God. It being so, he cannot condemn and punish without a righteous charge and imputation of the offence.” “Unless the guilt of our iniquities, or the law obligation to punishment for them, had been judicially charged upon him, it seems to me that he could not by any rule of justice have borne their punishment; for in the order of justice our sins must first be supposed to be placed to his account, to answer for them, before he could undergo the proper punishment due to them; since divine justice can no more punish the entirely and in all respects guiltless, than clear the guilty.” “Our Lord’s death was penal, and the vindictive cause of it was the judicial hand of God: the same hand avenges sin that imputes it; the imputation of sin and the punishment of it always following one another, as do the non-imputation of it and an exemption from guilt and penalty.” “How could Christ die if he were not a reputed sinner? Had he not first had a relation to our sin, he could not in justice have undergone our punishment. He must in the order of justice be supposed a sinner really or by imputation. It is as much against divine justice to inflict punishment where there is no sin, as it is to spare the offender. — Though the first designation of the Redeemer to a suretyship or sacrifice for us was an act of God’s sovereignty, yet the inflicting punishment after that designation and our Saviour’s acceptance of it, was an act of God’s justice. Had that been justice or injustice to Christ, to lay his wrath upon the Son of his love, one whose person was always dear to him, always pleased him, had he not stood as a sinner juridically

in our stead?" "If Christ hath been made a curse for us,— he must then have the violation of the law imputed to him; otherwise the curse of it could not in justice have been inflicted upon him. To inflict the curse or penalty of the law upon one no ways chargeable with the violation of it, is contrary to the justice both of God and man." "What is punishment but the infliction of the curse of the law for the violation of its precepts? And if the law could righteously inflict on the person of Manasseh a degree of punishment proportioned to his guilt (for without a proportion between the guilt and the punishment justice is not satisfied), the Substitute of Manasseh must bear the same punishment, or how could he be said to suffer in his stead?" "They are in some degree guilty of this [depreciating the sufferings of Christ], who will by no means allow that Christ bore the *idem*, the same death, the same curse, that was threatened in the law as due to sin. — What was that part of the sentence of the law that was gone out against sin, which he did not submit to? — Has the law any thing more dreadful in all its stores than the wrath of God? And who ever bore this if the blessed Jesus did not?" "I believe that Jesus Christ — has — suffered all that I was condemned to sustain." "It appears past contradiction that the Redeemer put himself in the very place where the redeemed stood, and took upon him that very curse which they were bound under." "Did we deserve one punishment and Christ undergo another? Was it the sentence of the law that was executed on him, or was it some other thing that he was obnoxious to?" "Mention is everywhere made of a commutation of persons, the just suffering for the unjust, the Sponsor for the offender (his name as a Surety being taken into the obligation, and the whole debt required of him); but of a change of punishment there is no mention at all." "Surely whatever could have been justly inflicted on the sinner himself, must be borne by him who shall pay the price of his release." "It is reasonable to suppose that the redemption price paid should bear an exact proportion to the number of persons redeemed, and to the guilt and punishment from which they are redeemed; or else it cannot be considered as a legal redemption." "If, therefore, a thousand delinquents, involved in different degrees of guilt, are justly liable to suffer in their own persons the punishment due to their various enormities; surely it must be self-evident that if the guilt of these enormities be laid upon Christ as their Substitute, and he suffer in their stead, he must bear the same punishment. If this be denied, and it be allowed that the Lord laid on him the iniquity of those delinquents, the law of God must have relaxed in the infliction of its curse, which as a moral institute was impossible." "I am convinced that the sufferings of Christ were in exact proportion to the guilt of the many sinners he had undertaken to redeem, and that

had the unworthy objects of his merciful regard been more numerous, these blessings would have likewise been augmented." "If our blessed Lord would not have suffered more had the number to be saved been much greater than it eventually will be, why should he have suffered so much as he actually did suffer? — Infinite justice will never inflict the least degree of undeserved punishment." To say, therefore, that the compassionate Redeemer suffered less than the delinquents who are redeemed would themselves have suffered, is not to magnify the riches of his dying love nor to honor his atonement. And to say that these sufferings are sufficient for ten times the number is to confound all our ideas of distributive justice." "The greater the sin of the elect was, the more Christ suffered; the greater their debt was, the more he paid." "If, as you suppose, our blessed Lord have suffered enough for the salvation of all men, how happens it that all are not saved?" "The more I reflect on this highly interesting and important subject, the more I am convinced that the sufferings of our blessed Lord were in every respect commensurate to the requirements of justice; — that the divine law to which he voluntarily became amenable, did not relax in any of its demands; that he did not endure a single pang more than it could have righteously inflicted on the sinners themselves; and that, in effecting their redemption, he did not suffer one less." "The punishment he suffered was in value and measure answerable to all the sins of all the elect, past, present, and to come; the Godhead supporting the manhood that it might be able to bear and overcome the whole burden of the wrath of God." "These sufferings were absolutely necessary for the salvation of the elect, or they were not. If indispensably necessary, a greater degree of suffering could not righteously be inflicted than was requisite for that end, or in other words, than was needful to answer the claims of justice. And if these sufferings, as to duration and intenseness, were absolutely requisite for the deliverance of the elect from final ruin, how is the benefit of these sufferings to extend to those who make no part of that number? For if our blessed Lord endured more than the least possible degree of suffering, that suffering could not be the result of mere sovereignty in him who will minister judgment to the people in righteousness, but the apportioned desert of imputed sin. It is repugnant to every principle of justice to suppose that these sufferings exceeded the demerit for which they were inflicted, and not less so to imagine that the merit of those sufferings extended to sin that it never expiated." "If, therefore, Christ suffered for those that perish, he must have effected their redemption; but if he did not suffer for them, he must, unless a part be equal to the whole, have suffered less than he would have done had the weight of their sufferings been added to what he endured." "If

his precious blood as the price was sufficient to make expiation for the sins and transgressions of all men, and all are not saved, how is impetration and application of the same latitude?" "Such, it has been said, was the preciousness of the blood of Christ, that one drop would have been sufficient for the redemption of the world. But for this notion there is no scriptural warrant. It is incompatible with the honor of divine justice in the infliction of punishment on Christ." "To contend that because infinite merit attached to the sufferings of Christ, these sufferings must of necessity be sufficient for the salvation of all men, is to limit the Holy One of Israel." "I know it has been said that though our blessed Lord died intentionally for the elect only, there is nevertheless a redundancy of merit in his death sufficient for the redemption of all men. This I considered as a mistake." "So far from there being a redundancy of merit connected with the atonement of Christ sufficient for the redemption of all men, that the want of it renders the condemnation of the non-elect indispensably requisite." "That our divine Jesus could have redeemed ten thousand worlds if in the everlasting covenant he had been constituted the federal Head, and had become the Surety of these worlds, is cheerfully granted." "Yet we cannot perceive any solid reason to conclude that his propitiatory sufferings are sufficient for the expiation of sins which he did not bear." "For had our blessed Lord suffered ten thousand deaths without federal relation to mankind, the blood he shed would have been equally precious, yet it would not have been available for the redemption of a single individual." "As, therefore, the sufferings of our blessed Lord were, in consequence of his own voluntary engagement, a debt due to divine justice, the degree of suffering could not righteously exceed the demerit for which it was inflicted: nor could the merit of that suffering extend to those whose sins he never bore, whom he never intended to save, and for whom therefore, he could not justly suffer." "If the sufferings of our blessed Lord were not regulated by the number to be saved, I think particular redemption, and the doctrines connected with it, cannot be successfully defended." *

From these principles, and because it is said, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," it is inferred that the law was literally executed upon Christ, and that justice was literally satisfied in his death; so that those for whom he died cannot justly be punished again, but may claim a release of justice itself. And because he is said to have been made sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," it is inferred that the righteousness of Christ is legally imputed to

* Geth. p. 8, 9, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 59, 60, 67, 68, 71, 82, 83, 84, 90, 106, 107, 111, 140, 144, 145, 149, 150, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156, 160, 161, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 182, 183.

the elect, and that they are considered righteous in the eye both of law and justice, and that too (if I understand the writers), not as believers, but as mere elect. "Christ and the elect are so united that what he did for them was reckoned by justice itself accountable to the behoof and concernment of each elected person, as much as if every one of them had completely satisfied justice in their own persons:—and—the fact of this union, when reduced to practical and personal application, secures the existence of genuine holiness and virtue." "Faith and repentance are bestowed upon and wrought in these persons, not as conditions, but as blessings, of that covenant." "If divine justice be perfectly satisfied by the sufferings of Christ; if it could ever say, it is enough; it could not stand with the same justice still to inflict punishment." "He who as the Judge of heaven and earth must always do right, is said to justify the ungodly,—and that out of justice, so that he is just in forgiving sin. Mercy erects her throne upon the basis of justice, and both equally preside at the tribunal of the Judge when he pronounces the sentence of absolution." "Redemption is either valid or invalid. If it be valid, then it will answer for the persons redeemed by it to their deliverance from curse and condemnation; or else divine justice might be charged with injustice in exacting a debt first from the Surety and then from the principal." "If Christ was punished in his sufferings, he bore either a part of that punishment to which we were obnoxious, or the whole.—If he bore the whole, let such who conceive that God punishes those for whom he died, vindicate and clear his justice in so doing if they are able." "The justice of God renders their salvation absolutely certain; because it would be incompatible with the first principles of equity to punish in their own persons those for whose sins Christ hath made ample satisfaction.—A price being paid, it is unjust to detain that for which it is paid." "They for whose sins complete satisfaction has once been made to the justice of God by the Mediator, cannot be arrested by the justice of God and bound over to an ulterior satisfaction for the same sins." And therefore the doctrine of a general atonement is inconsistent with the "justice" of God; as on that supposition "he received full satisfaction from the Son, and yet does not admit all to favor." "Almighty God, in the justification of a believing sinner, is not only gracious and merciful, but just and righteous in the most exalted degree. The design and end of God in exacting satisfaction from Christ was to declare his righteousness in the remission of sin. But the apostle would have us take notice that our justification is an act of justice as well as mercy; and that God, as he is a just God, cannot condemn the believer, since Christ has satisfied for his sins." "The righteousness by which we are justified before God must in a certain sense be our own in a way of

right, as Adam's sin also was, though performed in the person of another. Christ and Adam being parallels in their head-ship, the imputation of the one's guiltiness and the other's righteousness is righteously applied to their respective seeds. And this was the main end of the Lord's putting those he would justify into Christ, that he, being made sin and a curse for them, they might be made the righteousness of God in him, and so God might be just in justifying them. If the elect had not been in Christ, the satisfaction he undertook for sinners could not have availed them. As Adam's sin would not have been ours if not in him, so neither the righteousness of Christ if not in him. Divine justice could not have punished him for us nor absolved us through him." "The doctrine of general redemption — seems to tax God of injustice, as not discharging those whose transgressions are answered for by their Surety; or else, that the sufferings of Christ were not sufficient to make a discharge due to them." "The Socinians expressly oppose the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, and plead for a participation of its effects or benefits only. But to say that the righteousness of Christ, that is, his obedience and sufferings, are imputed to us only as to their effects, is to say that we have the benefit of them and no more, but imputation itself is denied." Christ "did not die as a Sponsor in the place of the reprobate: — for otherwise they cannot justly be punished; since God cannot punish one sin twice, once in Christ and once in them that perish, of whom he exacts his due even to the uttermost farthing." "Christ was not an Undertaker for a people under any general notions or qualifications (such as them that should believe on him, or the like), not knowing definitely who the persons were; but he was Surety and Undertaker only for the elect." "He died not at uncertainties, nor laid down his life at a venture, that some might be saved if they would; but his intention is fixed: he laid down his life for his sheep, for his church, for his people." "He bore the guilt of no others than those to whom he is a Head, who are his body, and for whom he became a Surety. For that was the foundation on which sin was imputed to him: and therefore the sins of such persons only were imputed to him who are related to him as members." Thus the elect, not under the aspect of believers, but as mere elect, were his body, his members, one in law with him, and made so before he suffered for them; and it would have been unjust for him to have suffered for others.*

What bearing these sentiments have on the limitation of the atonement, will still more distinctly appear by the following quotations. "That

* Geth. p. 13, 14, 37, 65, 66, 79, 80, 81, 83, 97, 101, 110, 113, 115, 116, 117, 166, 173. Also the delegates from Gelders and Emden, and the Dutch Professors, in the Synod of Dort. — *Acts of Synod*, Part II. p. 154, 155; Part III. p. 123, 131.

there is as truly a federal relation between Christ and the members of his mystical body, the church [the elect antecedent to their faith], as there was between Adam and his natural descendants, the Scriptures abundantly manifest: and it is this federal relation which laid the foundation for the imputation of their sins to Christ. But according to the sentiments opposed, — no such relation ever existed; there was no real imputation of sin to Christ, nor any proper punishment inflicted on him for it: consequently the penal sanction of the law, with reference to those who are saved, has never been endured. For were these important facts admitted, it is easy to perceive that redemption must of necessity be limited; because no one could righteously perish for whose sins plenary satisfaction had been made to divine justice.” “They insist that what Christ paid for our redemption was not the same with what is in the obligation, and that therefore his dolorous sufferings were not a proper payment of our debt; and consequently a proper and full satisfaction for our sins could not arise from his death to the law and justice of God. For were this satisfaction conceded, they see at once that the delinquents for whom it was made must inevitably be saved.” *

This whole system goes upon the principle that the atonement was a legal transaction, partaking of a commercial nature, as if money had been paid for the redemption of so many captives and no more, or for the discharge of the debt of so many imprisoned bankrupts and no more; in which case, as all can see, the ransomed captives or exonerated debtors would have a legal claim to a discharge. To make out a parallel case in a transaction where no money was paid, it is necessary to establish a personal identity (for I can call it by no other name), between the representative and the represented, which they denominate a legal oneness (the justice of which depended on his previous consent), and to make him legally guilty by imputation, and legally and justly adjudged to punishment in the room of those whom he represented, and to make him suffer a literal and legal punishment, the same in kind and degree that the law had threatened to that particular number. In this way law and justice were literally satisfied and could demand no more; and those whose debt was thus discharged can claim of law and justice a release, and cannot legally or justly be punished again, but have a righteousness legally their own by imputation, and which legally and justly entitles them to justification; and yet not a legal claim to justification in their own persons, but in their Surety; they virtually possessing two persons, one demanding of the law condemnation, the other demanding of the law justification: and all this not depending on their faith; for one of the blessings to which (though unconscious of it) they have this legal claim, is the gift

* Geth. p. 10, 11, 20, 21.

of faith. The result is, that Christ was a surety, sponsor, or representative for none but those who will be saved, and could not justly suffer for any whose sins were not thus finally taken from them and laid upon him.

Had a legal oneness between Christ and believers (as relates to justification, not to the amount of his sufferings) been asserted, it would not have limited the atonement; for it would still have left to all a chance to come into this relation to him by believing; and that would have been an atonement for all as moral agents. It was necessary to extend the oneness so far as to limit the sufferings: for had they been sufficient for all, it must be acknowledged, since the benefit is offered to all, that they change the relations of all, so that they can be pardoned if they will believe; which again makes out an atonement for all as moral agents. And if the oneness must be so extended as to affect the amount of sufferings, it cannot lie between Christ and those indiscriminately who would believe, but between him and a certain number of designated individuals, whose sins could be exactly weighed. And the oneness must have been established before he suffered, as his sufferings were to be their legal punishment. In every point of view the system must take this precise shape, in order to bear upon a limited atonement, which, as the author of Gethsemane conclusively pleads, can be supported on no other ground. The oneness must be legal to limit the sufferings; and when their limit is to be fixed, the number and individuals for whom they are to be endured must be known; and since the infliction is to be legal, it cannot take place till the union is first formed. It is of course a vital principle of the system that a legal oneness was established in the covenant of redemption between Christ and the elect, which exists of course before they believe, and existed before he died, and was the ground of the imputation of their sins to him; that the elect as elect were regarded in the covenant as his body, his members, his church, his spiritual seed, standing in the same relation to him that the posterity of Adam do to their federal head; in short, that antecedent to all faith, a complete legal oneness existed between the elect and Christ. He was legally bound to suffer their punishment both in measure and kind; and bonds being given to that effect, they had, though unknown to themselves, a legal claim to a discharge.

There are, I conceive, two errors in this system. The first is, that it makes the union which really subsists between Christ and believers to lie between Christ and the elect. The second is, that it supposes a legal oneness, a legal imputation, a legal obligation to suffer, a legal punishment, a legal satisfaction, and a legal claim on the part of the redeemed. We admit a very intimate union between Christ and believers, and that kind of imputation both of sin and righteousness which consists in treat-

ment, and a bond on him to suffer imposed by a divine command, and the infliction of that which answered every purpose of a legal punishment, and a full satisfaction yielded to the Protector of the law, and the claim of believers on the promise of God. But we deny that either of these is legal. The mistake of supposing them such has wholly arisen from drawing literal conclusions from figurative premises. Because Christ is said to be one with believers or his church, he is legally one with the elect. Because he is said to have been made sin for us (by which is meant that he was treated as a sinner), he became legally guilty by imputation. Because the Lawgiver demanded satisfaction of him by commanding him to die, law and justice made the demand. Because the iniquity of all is said to have been laid on him, he sustained the literal and legal punishment of sin. Because he was dragged to execution like a criminal, and fell under the stroke of him who was wont to act as the legal Executioner, law and justice were literally executed upon him. Because he rendered full satisfaction to the Protector of the law, by securing its authority as fully as though it had been literally executed, he satisfied both law and justice. Because by a covenant claim he bound the arm of the Lawgiver and Executioner not to strike believers, he bound the law itself not to strike the elect. Because we are said to be made the righteousness of God in him (by which is meant that we are treated as righteous, or have the complete use of a righteousness, or possess a gracious title to justification through the righteousness of the Redeemer), we are considered in the eye of the law as righteous. Because by his obedience he fulfilled all the demands of the law against himself, and answered all the purposes of our perfect obedience, and by his death accomplished all the ends of a literal execution of the penalty, and thus became the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, he wrought out a legal righteousness for the elect. And because God, having thus secured the authority of the law; can be just to himself, to his government, and to every interest, while yet he is the justifier of him that believeth, the justification of the elect is an act of distributive justice to them. Thus by pressing, in some instances, the figurative language of Scripture into a literal meaning, and by twisting the truth a very little in others, they arrive at all the conclusions which have been enumerated.

In proceeding to detect the mistakes of this system, I must begin by remarking, that the atonement had none of the attributes of a commercial transaction. Christ paid no money for us, he only suffered. There are two figures of a commercial nature which are commonly applied to the subject. The first represents Christ as paying a ransom for the redemption of captives, or purchasing his church; the second exhibits him as discharging the debts of imprisoned bankrupts. The former is

derived from the Scriptures. I have already admitted that the higher ransom, which involved the service of his obedience "unto death," was limited to the elect. Their salvation was promised him as the reward of that service. When he had fulfilled his part of the contract, he became justly entitled to the recompense, as a man is to an article which he has purchased. In this sense he may be said to have purchased the elect. And though the price is represented to be his blood, yet it was the merit of obedience in laying down that blood which really earned the reward. But this is altogether different from the atonement. When the atonement is spoken of as a ransom, it is only a price laid down to enable captives to come out if they will. If this distinction is kept in mind, all the appeals to our sense of commercial justice respecting the ransom will come to nothing.

The other figure, so far as I recollect, is purely of human invention. The Scriptures, I believe, nowhere speak of Christ's paying the debt even of believers, much less of the elect as such. They speak of the debt as still remaining, and as being, after repentance and faith, gratuitously forgiven. They teach us to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." They illustrate our discharge by the case of a servant who owed his lord ten thousand talents and had nothing to pay, to whom, in answer to his entreaties, his lord forgave the whole. Nor can it be overlooked, that this notion of paying our debt stands diametrically opposed to every idea of pardon, and to all those representations of a free and gracious justification with which the Scriptures abound. What remission or grace can there be in discharging a bankrupt when his debts are paid? You say there was grace in providing the bondsman. Granted. But when the bondsman has discharged the whole score, there is no grace in letting the debtor go. At least, there is nothing which answers to the scriptural idea of pardon.

All the popular arguments, then, which are drawn from the figure of paying debts, are not only unscriptural and of human invention, but directly opposed to the Word of God. There was nothing in the atonement of such a commercial nature. And yet the whole system which we are considering is built on the assumption that this august measure had all the attributes of a money transaction. There is only one way in which the resemblance can be at all maintained; and that is by establishing a personal identity between the representative and the represented. If this could be done, I admit that all the principles of a pecuniary payment would apply to the case. Whether, therefore, any of the arguments founded on commercial figures are at all applicable, depends on the single question of that personal identity.

In proceeding to examine this alleged oneness in law, we must keep

in mind between what parties it is supposed to exist. Were it placed between Christ and believers, it would not fix the exact amount of his sufferings, and of course would have no influence to limit the atonement. It is vital to the system to fix it between Christ and the elect, and to establish it before he suffered, and at the time he gave bonds to die. The theory, then, labors under two distinct and powerful objections : first, that a literal legal oneness in regard to guilt and righteousness is established between two parties ; secondly, that such a oneness subsists between Christ and the elect before they believe, and even before they are born. I will reverse the order and consider the latter first.

Whatever oneness subsists between Christ and believers, there appear to be insurmountable difficulties in the way of making it lie between him and the unborn or unregenerate elect.

First, no such oneness, I think, is spoken of in the Scriptures. I read, indeed, that Christ and believers are in some respects one, that Christ and his members are one ; that Christ and his church are one ; but where do we read that Christ and the unborn or unregenerate elect are one ? I know of but one passage which has the semblance of favoring such an opinion, Eph. 5 : 23-32. And that only speaks of a union between Christ and his church ; but then by church here is thought to be meant the whole body of the elect, because Christ is said to have loved and given himself for it, that he might sanctify it. The question, then, is, what is the meaning of church in the passage referred to ? It is admitted on all hands that in almost every instance in which the word is used in a general sense either in the Old Testament or New, it means the "visible church," comprehending all those who "profess the true religion."* Then the invisible or real church ought to comprehend all those who possess the true religion. This is certainly the antithesis between a visible and real Christian, and between visibility and reality in every thing. Again, it is admitted that when either of the Hebrew words which stand for church "occurs in the Old Testament," or the Greek word "in the New, you are sure of an assembly, but of nothing more."† But the elect are not an assembly before they exist, nor before they are gathered together in Christ. This gathering, as a distinct thing from election, is set in a strong light in the first chapter of Ephesians. "Who hath blessed us [believers] with all spiritual blessings — in Christ ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. — Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, — that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might

* The Christian's Magazine, reputed to be edited by the Rev. Dr. Mason, of New York, Vol. I. p. 56, 57, 64, 65.

† Christian's Magazine, Vol. I. p. 55.

gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." The gathering of the elect into an assembly or church, then, takes place in time, and as fast as they are made true believers. Accordingly, all the notices which we have of the real or invisible church, apply to the general assembly of actual believers. The description of that body is in these words, "The general assembly and church of the first-born [sons and heirs of God by regeneration and adoption], which are written in heaven," Heb. 12: 23, in the register of the city of God: not those who were destined to citizenship, but those who are actual citizens. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." Eph. 3: 21. And in the very place under consideration, "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it,—that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.—So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.—For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we [believers], are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Now the unborn or unregenerate elect are not subject to Christ, are not nourished and cherished by him, are not living members of him, are not married to him. The real church is "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Rev. 21: 9. As it is the marriage covenant which makes the wife, so it is the covenant of grace between Christ and believers which makes the church. The covenant between the sacred persons about the elect was like the espousal of infants to each other by the act of their parents; but marriage is effected by nothing but a mutual covenant between the parties. None belong to the real invisible church till they have given themselves away to Christ in an everlasting covenant, and till such a mutual affection is formed as subsists between husband and wife. The church, both visible and real, is the body of Christ, and its members are members of him. This is true of the visible church. "He is the head of the body, the church.—For his body's sake, which is the church, whereof I am made a minister." Col. 1: 18, 24, 25. The visible church seems to be respected, if not chiefly, in the following passage: "And gave him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. 1: 22, 23. This is true also of the invisible church; as appears from the very passage under consideration. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body.—No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as

the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery ; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Now, are the unborn and unregenerate elect thus one flesh with Christ, and members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones? Is there that nourishment derived from him while they are without life? Is there that mutual sympathy between him and them while they remain his enemies? Has he so many dead and putrid members hanging to his body? Very different is the view of his body as given by the inspired apostle. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. 4: 15, 16. It is a part of the system that the elect were "put into Christ" before the foundation of the world. But the Scriptures know of no such union antecedent to faith. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us — sanctification." "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." "Who also were in Christ before me." "The churches in Judea which were in Christ." "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." "God — hath quickened us, — and — raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." "We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Rom. 12: 5. 16: 7. 1 Cor. 1: 30. 3: 1. 2 Cor. 5: 17. Gal. 1: 22. 3: 28. Eph. 2: 4-6. 1 John 5: 20. The idea of being in Christ, is that we are so united to him as to draw present life from him, as the branches from the vine; and the bond of this union is faith. "Abide in me and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. — If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." John xv. It is a part of the system, that the unborn and unregenerate elect are the spiritual seed of Christ, made so by their federal relation to him. But if it is so, there is no analogy between the head-ships of the two Adams. The posterity of the first Adam possesses his temper as soon as they exist his seed; but according to this theory, men are the seed of Christ for many years without bearing his image, and while remaining strangers and enemies. A seed are not constituted such by

covenant, but are made such by birth. The seed of the first Adam became such by generation, and share by covenant only his sin and condemnation. If there is any analogy, men become the seed of Christ by a new birth, and instantly begin to partake of his holiness and justification. They are never the seed of Christ till they are the sons of God and heirs of glory. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8: 9. Accordingly, the seed that were promised Christ as a reward, were not a body of unregenerate elect, but a glorious company of believers. When this "general assembly and church of the first-born" are contemplated in relation to their Shepherd, they are the flock, the sheep who "know his voice," and know him, and "follow him," and will not follow a stranger. John 10: 4, 5, 8, 14, 27. The church, the body, the members, the flock, the sheep, the seed of Christ, are all terms of equal import, and denote, in their proper and primary sense, not the elect as such, but believers, the first-born, the sons of God and heirs of glory; but are applied to those who are visibly, as well as to those who are really such. Yet in one instance the unregenerate and unborn elect are figuratively and by way of anticipation, called the sheep: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. — Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." John 10: 16, 26. And once, by the same form of speech, they are called the children of God: "He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." John 11: 51, 52. On the other hand, in two places those who were already the church, or believers, are spoken of under that denomination, but with reference to their previous elect character. One of these instances is in the passage under consideration. "Christ also loved the church [that body of men who when developed are presented as the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife, married to him by covenant, united to him in mutual affection, "subject unto Christ," "one flesh" with him, his "body," "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones"], and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." That is, he gave himself that by his obedience "unto death" he might ransom the elect from the dominion of sin, and have a covenant right to sanctify them as his reward. In this sense he effectually purchased them. Now, whether the term church is applied to them viewed as the unregenerate elect, or as the body of developed elect under the character of believers, will appear from the other instance referred to in which the same form of expression is used. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves

and to all the flock [the sheep, the accredited believers of Ephesus,] over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20 : 28. Here the church which Christ loved and gave himself for, that he might sanctify it, is found to be the body of believers, contemplated with reference to their former character of elect. But it is only in the character of believers that the denomination of church is applied to them. When, therefore, it is said in the fifth of Ephesians, that Christ and the church are "one flesh," we are not to understand that such a union exists between him and the unborn or unregenerate elect, but only between him and the body of believers.

And when this passage is disposed of, I know of no other which has the semblance of favoring such an opinion. And to build so stupendous a structure on a single passage, which at best is of doubtful import, seems not to be wise or warrantable. The other texts which occur to me undeniably speak of believers. Take, for instance, that in the 17th of John : "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us :—I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

Secondly, if Christ is one in law with the unborn and unregenerate elect, then the latter were justified from eternity. It is alleged, that, by the covenant of redemption, they were put into Christ, and made federally one with him, as the posterity of Adam are with their federal head, and were constituted his spiritual seed, his members, his body, his invisible church ; and that this was the ground of the legal transfer of their sins to him, by which they obtained a claim on law and justice to a discharge. Then certainly they were justified from eternity. Adam's posterity are condemned with him as soon as they become his seed ; and the elect must be justified with Christ as soon as they sustain the relation of seed to him. How could they be federally his seed, and yet remain under condemnation ? If they were put into Christ, in any sense in which that phraseology is used in Scripture, they were certainly justified. "There is—now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8 : 1. If they were one in law with Christ, and their guilt was literally taken from them and put upon him, then they were clear. Take the favorite case of a bondsman assuming the whole debt : certainly where this is done the original debtor is discharged. I know there is an inconsistency in the very supposition of eternal justification, because justification respects the treatment and relations of moral agents in actual existence. But if men could so far exist in the purpose and view of God as to have their guilt literally and substantially transferred to Christ

from eternity, they could be eternally justified. Unless, then, we are prepared, in the face of the entire Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, to maintain the doctrine of eternal justification, we must abandon this idea of eternal oneness between Christ and the elect. Will you say, then, that they are one with him as soon as they exist? Then they are justified in a state of unregeneracy. It is manifest, that none but the justified can in any sense be one in law with Christ. The man who lies under condemnation at the same moment that Christ is justified, is neither considered nor treated as one in law with him. If, then, the unregenerate elect are one in law with Christ, and have a claim on justice to a discharge, they are already justified, not "by faith," but without faith. But this is certainly not the fact. They are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Eph. 2 : 3. And thus they remain, until by a new birth they become the seed of Christ, and are united to him in holiness and justification. And when they begin to draw life from him, then are they the members of his body, branches of the living Vine, parts of the real invisible church. Till then they are only destined to such an union.

But this legal oneness, whether with believers or unbelievers, is a thing impossible. There is such a thing as a legal oneness between two parties in certain respects, and to a certain extent. The following instances may be selected.

(1) A oneness in commercial concerns. Such an identity exists to a certain extent between husband and wife, and between partners in trade. The reason is, that two persons may have a common right in the same property, and according to the laws of society one may bind the whole concern. One person may also identify himself with another by bond. This is founded in the fact that property is not inseparable from the person, but is alienable at one's own discretion. Any man has a right to give his property to another, or, which is the same thing, to assume his obligations.

(2) Such an identity that one may act for another, and lay the other under moral obligations. Thus parents may bind their children out to an earthly master, and lay them under moral obligations to serve him. Thus they may bind them out to a heavenly Master in the ordinance of baptism, and lay upon them new obligations to serve him. This is founded on the fact that parents have received from God, and in the former instance, from the laws of society, a right thus to dispose of their children.

(3) A political oneness. All the inhabitants of a country are treated as enemies whenever the government sees fit to declare war. This is because they are understood to be so under the control of their govern-

ment as to be transformed by its authority into actual and voluntary enemies; or because they are considered so much the interest and care of the government as to be the proper medium through which revenge can be executed upon it.

(4) A oneness between a man and his representative, where the latter is only the organ to execute the will or to indicate the heart of his principal. Such is the identity between a king and his envoy, who is governed by royal instructions. Such I understand to be the identity between Adam and us. A oneness of moral character was first established between Adam and his posterity, so that if he was holy we should be holy, if he was sinful we should be sinful. This done, his outward act (for we are nowhere said to be condemned for the sin of Adam's heart), was as much the index of our heart as his own, and was made the public ground of our condemnation, in the same sense that our outward act would have been the ground had we eaten the apple ourselves.*

* Because Adam and his posterity are supposed to present an instance of such a legal oneness as we deny, it is necessary to dwell on this subject a little. The only passage in the Bible which plainly asserts that we are condemned to more than temporal calamities and death for Adam's sin, or which draws a complete parallel between Adam and Christ, is found in the 5th of Romans. The extent of the parallel is of course to be learned from the parallel itself, and nothing appears in it to limit its universality. Our surest way, then, to learn the connection between the first Adam and his posterity, is from the known connection between the Second Adam and his seed.

(1) By a covenant transaction between the Father and Son, those who were to be the seed of Christ were from eternity elected or appointed to a state of justification. To comport with this, the posterity of Adam, in consequence of a covenant transaction between God and him, were, before their existence, appointed to a state of condemnation.

(2) The elect are not justified before they become the seed of Christ by a new birth. To comport with this, the condemnation pronounced on the race does not apply to the individuals of Adam's posterity before they actually exist, and therefore not until they are shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.

(3) The first holy bias which is given to the seed of Christ in regeneration, is not the effect, but the antecedent, of their justification, and is produced according to the constitution established in the covenant of redemption. It is, however, a part of his personal reward. To comport with this, the first evil bias to which the posterity of Adam are left, is not the effect, but the antecedent, of their condemnation, and is the consequence of a constitution established in the covenant with Adam before the fall, by which the union of moral character between him and his posterity was fixed. It resulted, however, from his personal condemnation.

(4) The seed of Christ are justified as fully and extensively as Christ himself, being entitled to a deliverance from the power of a threefold death. To comport with this, the posterity of Adam are condemned as fully and extensively as he himself was to a threefold death. But he was not condemned to the first sin.

(5) The essential condition on which the seed of Christ share in his justification, is

But that legal oneness which can make a holy person chargeable in law and justice with the guilt of a sinner, and render his sufferings a lit-

that they resemble him in the temper of their hearts. To comport with this, the essential condition on which the posterity of Adam share in his condemnation, is that they partake of his depravity.

(6) The righteousness of Christ is the sole ground of the justification of his seed, and they are justified for his righteousness as fully as though it was their own. To comport with this, as far as the nature of things will admit, the offence of Adam is the sole ground on which the public sentence against his posterity rests, and they are condemned for his outward act as fully as though it had been their own. I say, as far as the nature of things will admit; for there is this difference in the two cases, as all must allow; the personal depravity and transgressions of Adam's race are a meritorious ground of condemnation, but the personal holiness of Christ's seed is no part of the meritorious ground of their justification.

On this account, and because it is abhorrent to all our ideas of justice to condemn a race, viewed as personally innocent, on account of the sin of another, I take the parallel to import no more than that Adam's outward act, as being the index of the hearts of all his posterity, was the public ground of condemning his infant race to a threefold death; and I think the Scriptures support this idea.

First, the sin of Adam for which his posterity are condemned was a single offence. The other sins of his life had no such influence on them. And the reason is, that the one offence by which he himself fell under condemnation, fixed, and by fixing, discovered, the character of all his race.

Secondly, the offence for which Adam himself was condemned, and for which his race are condemned, was an outward and visible act. Not a hint either in the prohibition or sentence about the sin of his heart.

Thirdly, it must always be kept in mind that the sentence of condemnation which came on Adam and his race was a public judgment, pronounced in the hearing of three worlds, and intended to affect the whole human race in a state of infancy. Now, it would not have comported with God's manner of dealing with his creatures, to have founded such a public sentence on any thing but visible conduct; and as it was to spend itself on a race of infants, who, though worthy to be condemned for their own depravity, would be incapable of any visible conduct on which the public sentence could rest, the manifest act of their federal head, which at once fixed and discovered their character, was made the public ground of their condemnation. They were condemned for his act just as though it had been their own, and in the same sense in which men are publicly condemned for any outward action. There are two things necessary to give complete existence to sin, so as to make it the proper ground of public condemnation; the consent of the heart, and the outward act. Now Adam for himself had both of these parts of a complete transgression; but his infant seed had but one. To supply this defect, his outward act was put for their outward act, as being, no less than their own, a faithful index of their hearts: and thus a complete foundation was laid for their public condemnation, and just such a foundation as was laid for the public condemnation of Adam himself. He was publicly condemned, not for a wicked heart, but for an outward transgression. But he would not have been condemned for that outward transgression had it not been the index of his heart. So they are publicly condemned, not for the depravity of their hearts, but for a visible act; but they would not have been condemned for that act of their federal head, had it not been an index of their hearts. As an organ to express the tempers of all men,

eral and legal punishment of the sins of the latter, and cancel the sinner's law obligation to suffer, and give him a claim on justice for a discharge, is a thing impossible, unless two moral agents can be absolutely and indivisibly one, with an intercommunion of moral qualities and sensations, which at once destroys the idea of one's being personally holy, and the other personally a sinner. There must upon this plan have been an absolute personal identity between Christ and the elect, even while the latter were dead in trespasses and sins and under condemnation; and then he must have been personally a sinner, and could not have conveyed to them even a figurative righteousness. This talk about a legal oneness seems to us about as cabalistic as the alleged identity between Christ and the bread and wine; and it manifestly sprang from the same origin, the confounding of the figurative and literal meaning of

it answered the identical purpose of an external act dictated by the universal consent, and performed by the united hands, of the whole human race.

Fourthly, the phraseology of the parallel, if understood according to this interpretation, is according to the established language of the world. We say a man was condemned for murdering his neighbor: we name only the outward action; and yet we distinctly understand that he would not have been condemned for that act had it not been viewed as an expression of malice prepense; for instance, had it been done by accident or in a paroxysm of madness. This is the universal language of mankind, as it is also of the Scriptures. In the form of expression we always found the condemnation on the outward action alone, but our meaning is, that it rests on the action as the index of the heart. So the apostle, in the form of his expression, founds our condemnation on Adam's act alone, but his meaning is, that it rests on that act as the index of our hearts. At least, if he is thus understood, he is understood according to the general language of the Bible, and the established language of the world.

Fifthly, none can ever prove that the apostle means more; for this is the only passage in the Bible in which we are said to be condemned for Adam's sin to more than temporal calamity and death; and neither in this nor in any other place is it hinted that we are condemned for the sin of Adam's heart.

The true reason, then, why we were condemned for Adam's sin, is that we were depraved, and in the sight of God were fit subjects for condemnation ourselves. And this has been the opinion of some of the best divines of the Genevan school. We, then, are treated no worse than we might justly have been treated had there been no federal head. If it was just to withhold divine influence from Adam and the angels before they had sinned, and immediately after a course of faithful service, it would not have been unjust to have withheld that influence from an infant race without a federal head. And when they had thus become depraved, and fit subjects for condemnation in the sight of God, justice would not have required that their visible condemnation should rest on a visible ground. They might, so far as justice was concerned, have been condemned for their own depravity without the public act of a federal head. Adam's sin is not imputed except as being the visible act by which their hearts were revealed. And to talk of their double guilt (their own and Adam's united), is like talking of the double guilt of a murderer, because he did the act and had a wicked heart.

According to this representation, there was no such legal oneness between Adam and his posterity as is pleaded for in the system under consideration.

texts. Because Christ says, "This is my body," and "This is my blood," the Romish Church will have it that it is literally true: and because Christ and believers are said to be "one flesh," like husband and wife, such a oneness must be supposed between him and the unregenerate elect as never existed between husband and wife, nor ever, so far as we are taught, between the Divine Persons. Certainly in the offices in which the Sacred Three are exhibited, there is no such confusion of persons as is here made between the holy Son of God and unsanctified sinners. Substitution does not constitute personal identity. All that is true in the case, when figures are laid aside, is, that the parties are treated as one. Christ was treated as a sinner on our account, and believers (not the unregenerate elect), are treated as righteous for his sake.

This we understand to be the only proper idea of imputation, either of sin or of righteousness. Imputation in neither case implies personal identity, nor does it consist in considering the parties as one (for God considers things as they are), but in treating them as one. I am far from denying the doctrine of imputation, or wishing to lay aside the use of the word, and regret that some have thought it necessary to do this. Imputation is a gospel term, and ought to be employed. But in almost every instance in which it is used in the Bible, it signifies a practical reckoning of a thing to a man, Lev. 7: 18. 17: 4. 2 Sam. 19: 19. Ps. 32: 2, with ver. 1. Rom. 4: 3-10, 22-24. 5: 13. 2 Cor. 5: 19. Gal. 3: 6. James 2: 23; only in two instances have I found it used for an opinion of the mind, 1 Sam. 22: 15. Hab. 1: 11; and never for any thing which implies a legal oneness between two persons. Calvin also explains the term by saying, Christ "was made a Substitute and Surety for transgressors, and was treated as a criminal himself."* I plead for a practical imputation, and deny only a legal one. Nor do I make it to consist in the imputation of the effects of sin and righteousness. I fully admit the imputation of sin and righteousness themselves, as to every practical purpose. But such an imputation as made Christ guilty in the eye of the law, and makes the elect, or even believers, righteous in the eye of the law, I do not understand. In particular, how the sins of the elect could be so imputed to Christ that he should be legally adjudged to suffer for them, while the law continued to demand punishment of the elect themselves, and held them still under condemnation, I cannot comprehend. Here are the two condemnations for the same offence which are so much complained of. To avoid this difficulty we must run again into eternal justification. And even here we are not safe; for the law still condemns those whom grace has justified.

* Gethsemane, p. 157.

It is said, that God could not justly inflict sufferings on Christ without first legally imputing to him our sins, and thus attaching to him a just liability to punishment. But what is gained by this resort? How did God legally impute to him our sins? Why, by commanding him to die, they say. It comes out, then, at last, that it would not have been just for God to strike, had he not first commanded him to receive the blow. But this seems a strange way of rendering a stroke just, which otherwise would have been unjust.

The *mediatorial* law did, indeed, require Christ to suffer. In other words, God, for reasons already assigned, commanded him to lay down his life. But that the *moral* law which man had broken, the moral law which was the exact measure of justice, required an innocent person to suffer for the guilty, is manifestly not the fact. We have the law before us, and know from the letter of it what it required. "The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die;" not, it or a substitute. That addition is supplied by the imaginations of men. The law knew no substitute. It demanded the death of the identical person who had sinned, and not the death of another. And unless another could become the same person by an intercommunion of consciousness and sensation, so that the punishment would attach to the identical agent who had sinned, the law could not demand his death. There could be no commutation of persons here as in a money transaction. Another may assume my pecuniary obligation, because he can give me so much of his property; but another cannot "take upon himself my person," and "sustain my person," so as to render him the "*it*" which the law declared should die. This is what no power could accomplish.

Christ, therefore, could not sustain our legal punishment, or the literal penalty of the law. If the law had said that we or a substitute should die, this might have been the case; but it said no such thing. The law is before us, and we see with our eyes that it contains no such clause. The plain truth is, that the sufferings of Christ were not our punishment, but only came in its room. They were not the death of the identical "*it*," that had sinned. They answered, indeed, the same purpose as related to the honor of the law, but they were not the same thing, and could not be the same thing, without an absolute personal identity. So far from enduring our punishment, the plain fact is, he died to prevent our punishment.

But it is still urged with a surprising degree of tenacity, that the honor of God and the eternal principles of right bound him to punish sin. But he did not punish sin; for the sinner escaped and the innocent suffered. It is said, that truth required him to punish. Then truth failed; for certainly he did not punish Paul, and Christ was not a sinner.

But it is not so that a lawgiver pledges his truth for the uniform execution of every sanction. The penalty is not of the nature of a prediction or promise, but merely states what transgression deserves and may ordinarily expect. Otherwise every act of mercy in human governments is a departure from verity.*

It is a part of the system, that Christ suffered in kind precisely what was denounced against the elect. What, was he given up to unholy and tormenting passions? for we have seen that such an abandonment was the spiritual death included in the sentence of the law. And what can be meant by his being the object of God's "disapprobation," and one whom he could not "approve and justify," unless the words are used in a highly figurative sense to denote the treatment which it was proper for him to receive? That God should in his heart regard with holy complacency in one view, and with infinite indignation in another, the same identical person, with an unmixed character, was manifestly as impossible as for the bread and wine to be the real presence. That he regarded him as an object standing to receive the treatment due to sinners (so far as was necessary to answer the purpose), while yet in every view he regarded his person with unmingled love, is the whole truth when figures are laid aside. Through all the incarnation the Father purposely showed that he was not angry, but well pleased, with the Son; that he was not punishing him as an enemy who had a separate interest from his own; that he felt for him through the whole scene; and that what he laid on him was a sacrifice of the parental as well as of the filial feelings. This appeared in his causing the elements, diseases, and demons to obey him, in the answer of his prayer at the grave of Lazarus and in the very scene of his sufferings, in the repeated declaration from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and in the mission of angels to support him in the wilderness and in the garden. Indeed, the moment you lose sight of the unabated love of the Father, the death of Christ no longer appears that wonderful expression of God's determination to execute wrath on future transgressors. In figurative language, I have no objection to saying, with our catechism, that he endured the wrath of God. But if this is construed to mean that he verily believed the Father was angry with him, or to mean any thing more than the withdrawal of the divine presence, and the imposition of amazing sufferings of body and soul, I must demur.

The lifeblood of the system lies in the assumption that Christ bore the exact punishment of such a number of sins, in measure as well as kind;

* That expression in the 85th Psalm, "Mercy and truth are met together," refers, I suppose, to God's faithfulness in executing his promises. See a note near the conclusion of the 6th chapter.

and men have talked with great precision about the necessity of punishing "each and every sin," and of laying "each and every sin" of the elect upon a substitute.* The meaning is not that he bore as much as all the elect deserved for an hour or a day (for why should he suffer exactly what was due to them for a season, and not what was due to them unlimitedly?) but the whole amount of what they deserved to eternity. This is manifestly the meaning. He endured "all that these iniquities deserved," "the punishment due to the sins of the elect," "the *idem*," "all that [they were] condemned to sustain," "whatsoever was due to the elect for their sin," nothing "less than the delinquents — would themselves have suffered," that which was "in exact proportion to the guilt of the many sinners he had undertaken to redeem," that which was "in every respect commensurate to the requirements of justice," "not a single pang more or less than the law could have righteously inflicted on the sinners themselves," "the apportioned desert of imputed sin." "The whole debt [was] required of him." "The redemption price [bore] an exact proportion to the number of persons redeemed, and to the guilt and punishment from which they are redeemed:" "for without a proportion between the guilt and the punishment, justice is not satisfied." "The sanction of the divine law is irreversible," and cannot "be annulled or relaxed."†

Now if it was so, it is difficult to see what was gained to the universe by the death of Christ. We have been accustomed to regard his substitution as a glorious expedient to prevent misery; but upon this plan every scintilla of wretchedness which Satan ever plotted against the creation of God was endured. But there is a stronger difficulty still. A single sin deserves an endless, which is in fact an infinite, punishment. The sufferings of Christ, then, must have been infinite for a single sin: and of course for a single sin his Godhead must have suffered; for to talk of a finite nature's sustaining infinite misery in a day, however supported by divinity, is, to say the least, using words without a meaning. His Godhead, then, must have suffered infinite misery, and yet but a single sin was atoned for. How, then, was all the guilt of all the elect to be expiated? Could he endure more, infinitely more, than infinite misery? misery as many times infinite, if I may so say, as the number of sins to be pardoned? This is probably the most extravagant opinion that was ever broached in the Christian church. And for it there is not a particle of countenance in the word of God. Where is the intensity of our Saviour's sufferings measured? What saith the Scripture? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." But

* Delegates from Drent in the Synod of Dort. — *Acts of Synod*, Part III. p. 209.

† Gethsemane.

how a curse for us? by suffering the infinite pains of damnation? No such thing: "for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gal. 3: 13. For a person of such infinite dignity to die on a tree, a death which had been pronounced in Israel accursed, Deut. 21: 23, was as strong an expression of every thing which punishment could express (except the literal and legal imputation of personal guilt), as could have been made by the eternal destruction of men. This was enough, and the endurance of the same misery in measure and kind was by no means necessary. If to the purpose of supporting the divine law, the sufferings of Christ, considering his infinite interest in the Father's love, were equivalent to the eternal misery of those for whom he died, it was sufficient: and if to such a purpose they were equivalent to the eternal misery of all Adam's race, they were sufficient, if expressly endured for so many, to make atonement "for the sins of the whole world." Certain it is that he must have died to atone for a single sin, for without the shedding of blood there was no remission. Heb. 9: 22. It is therefore fruitless to attempt to decide the number for whom he expiated by the severity of his sufferings.*

* A writer of much greater general consistency allows himself still to reason thus: "As all sins are particular, there can be no such thing as a general atonement unless it has respect to all the individual acts. — If justice required that any one of these sins should be punished in the sinner if he endures the punishment himself, it must equally require that every one of them should be imputed to any Surety who undertakes to satisfy in his place. An atonement, therefore, cannot be, as some suppose, a general expression of God's disapprobation of sin without regard to particular sins. — All the arguments which demonstrate the necessity of an atonement, prove that its nature must be a satisfaction to divine justice for particular offences; and if general, it is a satisfaction for all the particular sins ever committed. His death was, therefore, a real expiation, a full satisfaction for all the sins which were imputed to him. If he died for all men, then he did make satisfaction for all and every sin ever committed in the world, for the unpardonable sin and for final impenitence as well as others. — If Christ died for all men, then he died for all the sins of men. Therefore he atoned for those sins which are never pardoned. But what sort of an atonement is that for a sin which does not even render it possible for the punishment of it to be removed? The sin against the Holy Ghost, and final impenitence and unbelief, never can be pardoned; and to suppose them atoned for is absurd.

The Scripture declares two things; that Christ suffered for our sins, and that he rendered it consistent with the honor of the law for all the sins of believers to be pardoned. But that he bore each and every sin even of the elect, it nowhere says. Such a particularization is unknown to the Scriptures, and is a mere human inference from the assumption that sin was literally and legally punished in him. But what does the writer mean by Christ's bearing each and every sin? Does he mean that he suffered more for a thousand sins than for a hundred? This is not his meaning, for he plainly tells us, "We do not entertain the opinion that the Redeemer suffered just so much for the sins of A, and so much for B, &c. and if more had been intended to be saved, that he must have suffered so much more." What, then, does he mean? If Christ did

It follows from the foregoing reasonings, that the sufferings of Christ were not a literal satisfaction of law and justice, even in behalf of believers, much less in behalf of the unregenerate elect. The law is before us, and if we can read it we can see for ourselves what would have been a literal satisfaction of its claims. It never demanded the death of the innocent for the guilty, but the death of the identical persons who had sinned; and till this is yielded, the law is not literally satisfied, and justice (for the law is the exact measure of justice) is not satisfied. Justice did not take its course, for the Innocent suffered and the guilty escaped. But the authority of the law is supported, even in the event of the pardon of believers (not in the event of the pardon of the unregenerate elect, for that would ruin the law, and none the less for their being elect); and this was enough to satisfy the Protector of the law. This was the satisfaction really made. The Protector of the law was satisfied: and men in expressing this truth in figurative language, said that the law was satisfied. At length, when a system was to be supported, the figurative origin of the phrase was forgotten, and the literal meaning was transmuted to marble and erected in the church as a standard of orthodoxy.

If law and justice were not literally satisfied even in regard to believers, then law and justice do not adjudge to believers a discharge, much less to the unregenerate elect. Law and justice eternally demand the death of the persons who have once sinned; and the security of believers is, that they "are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. 6: 14. They really deserve to suffer as much as though Christ had never died. To them eternal punishment, though it would be a breach of promise, would not be unjust. It would indeed be unjust to Christ thus to deprive him of his stipulated reward; but it would not be unjust to them, because they personally deserve it. They do not merit what he merits. They cannot claim from justice what he claims from justice. They have

not suffer more for a thousand sins than for a hundred, how were a thousand sins rather than a hundred "imputed to him?" and how did he satisfy for "all the individual acts" of the thousand? If nothing more is meant by his bearing a million of Paul's sins rather than a thousand, but that he suffered for Paul's sins in general, that they all might be pardoned when he should believe, then the argument founded on this particularization is certainly fallacious. Then he did not bear a precise number of sins; and then the only question is, did his general suffering for sin render it consistent with the honor of the law for the elect only to be pardoned upon their believing, or for all men to be pardoned if they would believe? If the latter, then his death had sufficient respect to the sins of all men to constitute it a real atonement for all. But this dividing up of the atonement between particular sins (inferring that it was not for this and that unrenounced transgression), as though it was for sin in the abstract, and not for the sinner, is what the word of God knows nothing about.

the use of his righteousness, or a gracious title to justification on his account ; but his righteousness is not literally their righteousness, but only comes in its room. Otherwise there is neither grace nor pardon in their acquittal. If you say that to them it is grace and pardon, though to Christ it is an act of justice, this is precisely what we mean ; and then we ought to hear no more of their claim on justice. All that a substitute could do for them was to reconcile their pardon with the honor of the law ; but he could not lay an obligation on the law to justify them, as if they had a literal righteousness. By his obedience “unto death” he could create an obligation on the Father to fulfil his covenant, but he could not bind the law to repeal its sentence, “The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die,” and to declare transgressors justified : for that after all would have been a justification by law. It is said that the justification of believers is an act both of mercy and justice. If it is meant that it is an act of mercy to them and of justice to Christ, I agree. But if it is meant that it is both mercy and justice to them, it is like saying that a man delivers his neighbor a sum of money as a gratuitous gift, and at the same time to pay a debt of that amount. No proposition can be more contradictory than that the justification of a transgressor is a legal transaction, or that a sinner is literally righteous, or that a man is justly entitled to pardon.

But you say, that, though the believer is undeserving in himself, the Redeemer has made over to him his own claim, and given him a right to plead that at the bar of eternal justice ; just as a man makes over to another a pecuniary claim against a third person. This notion of a commercial transfer has occasioned all the mistake. The creditor, it is said, only demands his money ; and if the debt is paid by a third person, justice can ask no more. This would be a fair illustration if Christ had actually paid our debt ; but he only prepared the way, as we have seen, for the debt to be freely forgiven. The case adduced, therefore, is really no illustration. In an affair of debt, the creditor has indeed no just claim for any thing but his money. He has no right to prevent a third person from making a present to the debtor. When that third person comes forward and pays the debt, he really makes a present to the debtor of the whole amount. He actually increases the debtor's property ; and the creditor's claim is as really cancelled as though the money had passed through the debtor's own hands. It is easy thus to transfer property by gift, but not thus easy to transfer personal merit, with which moral or distributive justice is concerned. In this difference lies the fault of the illustration. A man may make over his property and render a pauper rich ; but a holy person cannot make over his moral character and render a sinner personally righteous, nor transfer the benefit of his

sufferings so as to render a transgressor personally undeserving of punishment. By suffering for him he may render it unnecessary to the public good for him to suffer; and the ruler, finding the necessities of the law answered, though not one of its demands, may graciously forgive; yea, he may have promised to forgive, and may be bound to pardon by truth and wisdom, and even by justice to the substitute, but not by justice to the sinner himself, so long as it remains true* that he personally deserves punishment.

But let us examine this subject to the bottom. A man personally deserving to die, it is said, may demand from justice, in other words from law, an acquittal, under the claim of another who has suffered for him. But how came the substitute by such a claim? He may indeed have a demand on the ruler, founded on a promise, for the pardon of the offender; but who gave him a claim on the law for a sentence that the transgressor has never broken it? or a demand binding the law to pardon (the law pardon!)? or binding the law to accept an innocent victim for the guilty? The law, which (to make the case a parallel one) is the exact and unchanging measure of justice, said that the sinner, not an innocent substitute, should die. That then, and nothing but that, is the claim of justice,—the unchangeable, indestructible claim of justice. How came a substitute possessed of a demand which annihilates this, and renders the immutable claim of justice unjust? Even the administrator of the law cannot be bound by justice (other than that justice to the substitute which arises out of a promise of reward) to accept the sufferings of an innocent person in the room of the guilty. How can he be? If the brother of a murderer comes forward to-day and offers to die in the criminal's stead, are the rulers of the land bound by justice to accept the substitution and to let the murderer escape? But how came they bound? Their law, which (to make it a parallel case) is the exact measure of justice, said nothing about a substitute, but merely that the murderer should die. That then, and nothing but that, is justice, or can become justice; and nothing else can annihilate justice, and take its place, its name, and its nature. On what principle, then, can the substitute force himself upon them, and in the name of justice demand the release of one whom their law and justice condemn?

But suppose the rulers have stipulated with the innocent brother to accept his substitution, and have thus allured him on to death, nay, have inflicted the stroke with their own hand, are they (but they are still not their law),—are they not now bound by justice to release the criminal? I answer frankly, not by justice to the criminal, but certainly by both truth and justice to the substitute. Here is a claim of justice to be satisfied. By what? By the fulfilment of a contract on the part of the rul-

ers. But we have been speaking of a claim of justice supposed to have been satisfied by the death of the innocent brother. By this insensible transition from one claim to another the confusion is introduced.* No one doubts that it is an act of justice to Christ to do to those for whom he died according to all the antecedent stipulations, and therefore to regenerate the elect and to justify and save believers. But we are not speaking of a claim of justice to be satisfied by an act of the Father, but a claim supposed to have been satisfied by the death of the Son; not of a debt of reward due from the Father to the Son, but of a debt of suffering due from sinners to the divine law. It is admitted that Christ by his obedience "unto death" rendered a stipulated service which justly entitled him to the promised reward; but this is not saying that by his expiation he paid to eternal and immutable justice, whose rights are not conventional, all that was due from believing sinners. He created a debt in favor of himself, but did not pay what sinners owed. He made out a claim on justice by his obedience, but did not satisfy one by his expiation. After the Father had constituted him the Saviour of the world, and had publicly promised to accept his sufferings in behalf of believers, and had secretly covenanted to communicate faith to the elect, he owed it to him to do as he had said. This was a claim against the Father. But the question is, whether the atonement satisfied a claim which the divine law had against sinners. This was a claim for the death of the transgressor in person, and not of an innocent substitute. This claim was certainly not enforced; but, instead of that enforcement, the death of Christ was accepted as an equal honor to the divine law. This is the plain matter of facts in whatever language it may be wrapped up.

But it is asked, if one person has a just claim on another for kind treatment, can he not transfer that claim, no less than a pecuniary one, to a third person? This question cannot refer to the claim of Christ to be himself the object of the Father's love (for that, of course, he cannot transfer), but to his claim to the salvation of believers. Can this claim be transferred to them? If a child, you say, visits one whom his father has befriended, he feels himself invested with a personal claim to a kind reception, and if otherwise treated, resents it as a personal injury, and not merely as an act of injustice to his father. Granted. But who gave him that claim? Not his father, but his God. The fifth commandment

* Thus Dr. Owen: "He who, without the consideration of the oblation of Christ, could not but punish sin, that oblation being made, cannot punish those sins for which Christ offered himself. Yea, he is more bound in strict right and in justice, in respect of Jesus Christ, to confer grace and glory on all those for whom he died." *Gethsemane*, p. 83. We ought to settle once for all whether God owes the acquittal to Christ or to the sinner, and keep to one point.

has invested every man with a right to be treated according to the relations which he sustains. The son of a king is entitled to more respect than the child of a beggar, and the son of a benefactor stands in a different relation from the son of an enemy. The child of your friend has a claim of that general sort which is possessed by your neighbor, and approaching to that which your own child possesses. Your own child has a peculiar personal claim upon you; but did you give him that claim against yourself? No, it was given him by God. But who or what gave the Mediator a claim to the pardon of a sinner but the promise of God? That promise fastens the claim immovably in himself, and created no such relation for the sinner as gave him a right by any law to urge the claim in his own person. It cannot possibly be in him unless he has actually performed the same service, or is absolutely identified with the person of Christ. The claim of the Redeemer to the salvation of believers has never been transferred or alienated, but remains in himself. He has not put it into their hands as though about to leave them, and sent them into the world endowed and alone. No, he abides with them, and is himself at once their Guardian and their title to life. It is for his own mere sake, from direct regard to him, and to satisfy a claim which his obedience created, and which must be unalienably his own so long as it remains true that the obedience was his and not another's, that they receive their mercies from hour to hour.

This love of independence, which grasps the thought of having the claim in our own possession, is much like the wish of the heir to get the inheritance out of the hands of the parent; or that propensity in men, which, though not opposed to receiving existence from God, cleaves to the idea of having been set forward with a self-moving power. We have indeed a claim, but it is of a far different sort; not on justice, but on a promise dictated by free, rich, and amazing grace.

On the whole, if God should refuse to regenerate the elect or to save believers, in other words, should treat any of Adam's race less favorably than was stipulated in his public or private promises, it might be a breach of faith, it might be a dereliction of the principles of wisdom and general goodness, it might be injustice to the Mediator, but it would not be injustice to men; that is, it would not be treating them worse than they personally deserve, or worse than they must continue to deserve, though omnipotence were exhausted in transferring guilt and righteousness, so long as it shall remain true that they have ever sinned.

And this accords with the consciousness of every true believer, whatever systematic phrases he may be accustomed to use. When he is humbled in the dust at the feet of his Maker, it is furthest from his thoughts to make demands on justice. His language then is, "God be

merciful to me a sinner." And when he obtains a sense of pardoning love, he is the more confounded, and opens not his mouth for shame, because a holy God is pacified towards him for all that he has done. Every day of his life he confesses that it would still be just in God to send him to perdition. And if it would be just, justice still demands his death. And if justice demands his death, justice is not satisfied.

The literal truth is, that Christ answered all the purposes to the divine law which could have been accomplished by the actual satisfaction of its demands against believers, and the actual satisfaction of justice upon them. And this being done, it may be said by an easy figure, that law and justice are satisfied. And though these expressions are not scriptural, but of human invention, I do not object to their use in prayer and popular discourses. But every divine and every christian ought to know that they are figurative expressions, and not attempt to draw from them literal conclusions.

The foregoing remarks apply to believers. But in order to bring this notion of a literal satisfaction to bear upon the limitation of the atonement, it is necessary to make out a satisfaction for the elect as elect. Then from the time it was made, and even from the time that bonds were given to make it, they were more than justified in our sense of the word; they were acquitted by law and justice, in other words, could demand of law and justice a sentence that they were as free from sin as the angels in heaven. And then during all the days of their unregeneracy, law and justice had no demands against them. No condemnation or even censure could reach them. Amidst all their rebellions and blasphemies, they stood as perfectly acquitted as Gabriel; law and justice both bending over them with their protecting shield, and constantly pronouncing them as spotless as heaven.

This is not scripture. Christ never in any sense made over his claim to the unregenerate elect. They had no claim but to perdition, lying at full length under the undiminished pressure of the curse, — "children of wrath even as others." Peter himself had no righteousness till he believed. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness" only "to every one that believeth;" and it is constantly called "the righteousness of faith," "the righteousness which is of faith," "the righteousness which is by faith," "the righteousness which is of God by faith," "the righteousness of God which is by faith," and the righteousness to which man believeth with the heart. Rom. 3: 22. 4: 11, 13. 9: 30. 10: 4, 6, 10. Phil. 3: 9. Heb. 11: 7. Christ could not be the end of the law for righteousness to unbelievers. He could not answer the purpose to the law of a literal fulfilment of its demands on them, so as to reconcile with its honor the pardon of those who continue to trample its authority in the

dust. We see at a glance that this was impossible. He could in no degree relieve the elect as elect, as unbelieving sinners, from the pressure of condemnation. He could not, therefore (in the language so much approved), discharge or assume the debts of the unregenerate elect. He could not then stand the absolute surety or sponsor of such.

No, you say, but he stood the absolute surety and sponsor of the elect viewed as believers. If you mean that he covenanted with the Father about the gift of faith to them as the reward of his obedience "unto death," I agree. But when you speak of suretyship and sponsorship, you refer to his assumption of their debts and obligations, and plainly have your eye on his atonement. But the atonement did not obtain for them the gift of faith. The suretyship and sponsorship therefore did not secure to them the character of believers. That was done by an influence lying wholly without these offices. The virtue of these offices must be spent, and the reward for executing them bestowed, before the elect would be believers. In other words, the atonement must be finished, and the reward for making it conferred before they could receive the gift of faith; for that gift was Christ's reward for making atonement. Or, to resort to the favorite phraseology, their debts must be assumed and discharged by their surety, and he must be recompensed for having finished the work, before they would believe. Did he then pay the debts of believers or unbelievers? They must be freed from debt, and the reward of their liberation must be bestowed before they will believe. Do they go out believers or unbelievers? Plainly if Christ was an absolute surety or sponsor for so many elect sinners by name, he sustained this relation to them, not as believers, but as unbelievers.

This lays open at once the fallacy of that dream about an absolute suretyship and sponsorship, and representation for the elect, which has been bred in the imaginations of good men. These terms, especially the first two, belong to the legal system, and plainly glance at a money transaction and a legal commutation of persons. And let it be remembered that they are purely of human invention. But if in any sense it is proper to say that Christ was a surety, sponsor, or representative, he was so, not to men as passively appointed to receive sanctifying impressions, but only to moral agents and believers; for to none but agents do those relations belong which such an office was capable of affecting. I am willing to consider him in the light of a representative, but he was so only in the public transactions, and not in the secret covenant. In a conditional sense he may be considered the representative of a whole world of moral agents; but if you speak of a higher suretyship or representation, indissolubly connected with saving effects, it respected

only believers. Those for whom such a suretyship is undertaken, must from its commencement be entitled to a discharge, exonerated from obligation to suffer, acquitted. Every analogy testifies that believers only are represented in this higher sense. Adam represented a posterity whose temper was like his own, and would not have been their representative without that essential circumstance: and if any analogy exists between the two headships, Christ must represent, in this higher sense, only a seed who resemble him in character. The very idea of Adam's representation was, that it involved his posterity in his own condemnation as fast as they become his posterity by actual existence: to comport with this, Christ's higher representation must involve men in his own justification as fast as they become thus represented. Are the representative and the represented treated as one? none are treated like Christ but the justified, "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Whom should the Head represent but the body, the members? But in the higher sense he is the Head of believers only. No others are invested with his righteousness and owned in the presence of his Father; no others are accepted through his intercession. They are "his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." *

* To this latter idea of representation the view is confined in the *Body of Christ*, written by the Rev. James M'Chord of Lexington, Kentucky, a man of no ordinary powers of mind. He overlooks the representation of men as moral agents, or he would be in agreement with us at almost every point. Mr. M'C.'s system is as follows: The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the Head of the body, the church; which, whatever numbers it contains, constitutes, together with the Head, in all periods of time, one mortal unit. Christ represented, not the elect as such, not the world at large, but the church as a body, and every individual which belonged to it at the time of his death; and every one, though unknown to the covenant before, becomes represented as soon as he believes. As the atonement was sufficient for all, and the covenant was restricted to no number, Christ is capable of becoming a representative of one as well as another, provided they believe. Thus the privilege of an atonement is open to all alike, though no expiation is actually made for any but believers. A possible salvation is thus provided for all. The covenant which secured the salvation of the elect was quite a different thing, being made, not between God and the Messiah, but between the first and second persons of the Trinity, with a view to the latter's becoming the Messiah. In short, he excludes from the atonement every thing which discriminates the elect, and holds out a provision which is capable of becoming an actual atonement for every man, if he will but accept it. Here, then, is a conditional atonement for all as moral agents; and this is exactly what those eastern brethren mean with whom Mr. M'C. is considerably displeased. The key which he wanted to unlock every ward which he failed to open is to be found in the existence and attributes of moral agents. When he has familiarized his mind to this subject, his controversy with those who maintain a general atonement will cease. But insulated as Mr. M'C. was, and embarrassed in various ways as he seems to have been, it is not so great a wonder that he saw some things obscurely, as that he discovered so much.

The foregoing remarks give a different view to the whole transaction. In this representation you find not that legal oneness between Christ and the elect, that legal imputation of a precise number of sins to him, that legal punishment and literal satisfaction of law and justice for a given number, and that legal acquittal of all for whom satisfaction was made, which involve the consequence that all for whom it was made must in justice to them be pardoned. Nor do you find that legal identification from which it can be inferred that all for whom it was made must in justice to Christ be pardoned. Whether all for whom as moral agents he atoned (and none but agents sustained those relations which an atonement could affect) must in justice to him be brought to repentance and pardon, depends on the nature of that secret covenant by which his claims were regulated. That which could give to his death such a bearing upon public law and the legal relations of men as to constitute an atonement, let it be distinctly remarked, was not a secret compact between the sacred persons, but the public avowal of the design of his death. The secret covenant related simply to his reward for making atonement. Whether, therefore, any for whom he atoned (that is, any whose legal relations he so changed that they could be pardoned if they would believe) could in justice to him (in justice to themselves they certainly might) be left unsanctified and perish, depends on the nature of the secret covenant, which regulated his claim to a reward. If it was the mutual understanding of the sacred persons in that covenant, that the public annunciation should be so shaped as to give the atonement a bearing on a whole world of moral agents, in a way honorable and gratifying to Christ, while only a part should be sanctified and given him for a seed; then no injustice is done to Christ if a part of those for whom he atoned are left unsanctified and perish. If it shall appear that besides the secret covenant, in which the elect were distinguished only as passive receivers of sanctifying impressions, there was a sort of open and visible compact between the Father and Son (the public annunciation before referred to), according to which the atonement was publicly offered and accepted for a whole world of moral agents, to have this precise operation, "that whosoever believeth should not perish;" then all injustice is wiped from the transaction, and every thing is made out for which we plead.

THE WHOLE DIFFERENCE AT ONE VIEW.

The point of separation between the parties, so far as the nature of the atonement is concerned, plainly lies here. It is agreed on all hands that expiation and satisfaction stand together as cause and effect; but

our brethren make both of these commensurate with the higher *λυτρον* or ransom by which the higher *λυτρωσις* or redemption was accomplished, and then raise a question about particular redemption. Particular redemption (meaning by redemption the effect of that ransom which included both expiation and merit) they can prove; and if this was all they attempted, the dispute would be at an end. But by uniting the two distinct influences of expiation and merit in what they call the atonement, they make the atonement accomplish the whole redemption from sin and death, and constantly speak of the higher ransom as having no other influence than to expiate and satisfy. The inference is, that no expiation or satisfaction was made for those who do not feel all the influence of the higher ransom, in other words, are not redeemed from the power of sin. And when they have put into satisfaction the whole influence of merit with all its claim to reward, satisfaction itself has a claim. And when they find satisfaction with a claim, forgetting that they put into that satisfaction a claim to a reward, they know not how to make out the claim without making the satisfaction a literal satisfaction of law and justice. And to get at this there must be a literal legal oneness between Christ and the elect. This is manifestly the process by which the whole scheme has come into existence.

PART II.

EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE CURSE OF ABANDONMENT REMOVED FROM ALL.

ACCORDING to the foregoing pages, the only effects which the atonement had on Peter were these two: it removed the curse of abandonment, and thus took away the penal bar to his sanctification, and it rendered his pardon consistent with the honor of the law on the supposition of his believing. Had it these two effects on all? If so, it was in fact a general atonement, whether intentionally or otherwise. The main question, then, may be resolved into these two: Did the atonement remove the curse of abandonment from all? and did it render the pardon of all consistent with the honor of the law in case they should hear the Gospel and believe? The former question will be disposed of in this chapter, the latter will then claim our undivided attention.

After such a death in our world to support the penalty of the law given to men, no favor shown to the human race could weaken the influence of the penalty, unless it spread a shield over irreclaimable wickedness. No power exerted to turn men from wickedness could weaken it, be they who they might. So far, then, as the influence of the penalty was concerned, it had become consistent with the honor of the law to grant the Spirit to all men. And this is what I mean by removing the curse of abandonment.

If it shall appear that the atonement rendered the pardon of all men consistent with the honor of the law, on condition, not that they should receive faith, but that they as agents should believe, then it left no legal bar to their full discharge from every part of the curse but their own evil agency, and therefore no restriction, imposed by the curse, on the sanctifying agency of God.

In the public explanation accompanying the atonement, it was not to be expected that any notice would be taken of its influence on the grant of regenerating grace; for that explanation, as we shall see hereafter, referred only to agents, but this grace is bestowed on passive receivers. All that could be expected, in relation to the Spirit, from an explanation thus limited, was a general notice that a way was opened to bestow this blessing on all who as agents would believe. That notice was given. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" implying that they should eternally be sanctified. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spoke he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive." "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." John 3: 16. 7: 38, 39. Acts 2: 38. It will appear hereafter, that nothing is promised on the condition of faith which it would injure the law to grant, allowing the fact to take place that all respected in the promise should of their own accord believe. If, then, the Spirit was promised to Simon Magus on the condition of his faith, the law would not have been injured had he actually believed and received the Spirit as a gracious and eternal reward. And if the Spirit was communicable to him on the condition of his faith, the curse of abandonment was removed; for that was involved in a judicial sentence which declared that Simon Magus should never on any conditions receive the sanctifying Spirit to eternity.

But it was not mere atonement which produced this whole effect. The merit of Christ, as we have seen, was requisite to complete the opening for the mission of the Spirit; for it was necessary to the highest honor of the law that all positive good should be granted as the reward of a perfect righteousness. Atonement removed the penal bar which sin had raised; merit gave opportunity for the blessing to come as the recompense of a full homage to the law.

But when we introduce the merit of Christ, it must be acknowledged that this was not employed to make provision for the regeneration of Simon Magus. That is, the covenant of redemption did not provide for his regeneration as a part of Christ's reward. In this respect complete provision was not made for his regeneration in consistency with the highest honor of the law. This, however, was no defect of the atonement (for it remained after sin was covered and the penal bar removed), but lay in the single fact, that the regeneration of Simon was not promised to Christ. And this was a matter which respected Simon, not as a moral agent, but as a mere passive receiver of divine impressions.

As a moral agent the very obedience of Christ made provision for his sanctification. That is, it provided for his continued sanctification, if he would once believe. For though in that secret covenant which respected passive receivers, his regeneration was not connected with Christ's reward, yet the public explanation accompanying the death of the Mediator, which related to moral agents, and was a sort of visible compact between him and the Father, gave him an open right to claim as his reward the continued sanctification of the whole world, if they as agents would once believe. Thus by the merit as well as the atonement of Christ, provision was made for a whole world of moral agents in reference to their sanctification, that is, a provision which they might enjoy by doing their duty.

In every view but one, the atonement was a mere provision for moral agents. As it bore on regeneration, it barely removed a penal bar to sanctifying impressions on passive receivers; but even this was accomplished by an operation on the relations of moral agents; for it was the removal of a curse which moral agents had incurred. In every other point of view the atonement was purely a provision for moral agents. As it opened the way for the Spirit to be given them as the gracious reward of their faithful seeking, it was such. As it bore on pardon, it was such altogether. The way is now prepared to consider it in the latter light alone. And here the question is, did it reconcile with the honor of the law the pardon of Simon Magus in case he of his own accord would believe? If it did, it was a complete provision for him as a moral agent, and as full an atonement for him as for Peter, whether intentionally so or otherwise.

CHAPTER II.

GRAND POINT OF DIVISION BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

"WHEN the remonstrants," says Dr. Watts, "assert that Christ died for all mankind merely to purchase conditional salvation for them; and when those who profess to be the strictest Calvinists assert [that] Christ died only — to procure absolute and effectual — salvation for the elect; it is not because the whole Scripture — asserts the particular sentiments of either of these sects with an exclusion of the other. But the reason of these different assertions of men is this, that the holy writers in different texts pursuing different subjects, and speaking to different persons, sometimes seem to favor each of these two opinions; and men,

being at a loss to reconcile them by any medium, run into different extremes, and entirely follow one of these tracks of thought and neglect the other. But surely if there can be found a way to reconcile these two doctrines, of the absolute salvation of the elect, — and — the conditional salvation provided for all mankind ; — this will be the most fair, natural, and easy way of reconciling these different texts of Scripture, without any strain or torture put upon any of them.”*

This “medium” of reconciliation, this hidden cause of the diversity of language in the sacred writers while “pursuing different subjects,” the same distinguished writer sought and found. The clue which he discovered lay among the relations of moral agents, where we shall seek it in the following pages.

As that class of Calvinists who advocate a general atonement are among the firmest supporters of absolute personal election, and as those who sustain the opposite side generally admit that all are bound to live by the atonement, I have often asked myself, where can this difference lie? To what radical principle can it be traced? Where is the angle of separation? As both parties are agreed in their cardinal positions, by what means do they arrive at such opposite conclusions? The following is thought to be the solution of the mystery.

One party contemplate men as passive receivers of sanctifying impressions; and their question is, how many did God intend by regenerating influence to make partakers of the benefit of the atonement? The answer is, the elect. And so say we. The other party contemplate men as moral agents; and their question is, how many did God intend to furnish with a means of pardon which they should be under obligations to improve for their everlasting good? The answer is, all who hear the gospel. And so say our brethren. Thus the dispute turns out to be chiefly about words. Whose language is the most correct, depends on the question whether the atonement in its own proper influence was adapted to affect men as moral agents, or as passive subjects of divine impressions. If it spent all its force on agents, then in deciding for how many it was provided, we must see on how many it left those traces which belong to agents. If, on the other hand, it exhausted itself on passive subjects of sanctifying impressions, we have only to ask how many in consequence are sanctified.

I am inclined to think that this is the original angle of separation, and that the dispute about the nature of the atonement is rather consequential. The mistake of our brethren, as we view it, has arisen from not keeping these two characters of man distinct. They have confounded

* Watts' Works, Vol. VI. p. 286, 287.

the two, and by confounding have buried up the agent under the passive receiver ; and what was intended for the agent they would not allow was intended for the man, unless he was to be sanctified. The two characters I shall have occasion to show hereafter are about as distinct as body and soul ; and on their marked separation the solution of almost every difficulty in metaphysical theology depends. And had our brethren kept the distinction plainly before them, they would have seen that the atonement was for agents, and agents alone ; and then they would have had nothing to do with the question how many were to be passively regenerated. And then they could not have reasoned about the nature of the atonement as they have done. The mistake lies in not perceiving that an atonement intended merely for agents is completely for them, without reference to the question whether the same creatures are to be regenerated.

The question which continually lies before our brethren is, how many did the sacred persons intend to save by an influence on them as passive ? Hence they tell us, "When a question arises concerning any transaction, for whom it was done, it is decided by ascertaining the intention of the principal agent." Christ "may be said to have died for all whom he designed to bring to salvation, and for none else." "It will be pretended that Christ died for all, but suspended the benefit of his death upon a condition. Be it so. Then when Christ died he knew whether that condition would ever take place ; or rather he knew that it never would in those to whom he had determined not to give faith. And to say that a person does a thing to take effect on a certain condition, which he is sure will never occur, is the same as to say that he does a thing without any view to that effect." Our question has nothing to do with any of these matters, but is merely this : whose relations to the divine law did the sacred persons intend so to change that they could be pardoned if they would believe ?

Our question always is, for whom did Christ atone ? The question of our brethren is, for whom did he die ? meaning, for whom did he offer the double influence of expiation and merit, which met in his death and constituted the higher ransom ? And what they maintain is not so much a limited atonement as particular redemption. But they do not distinguish between the two ; and in the midst of an argument to disprove a general atonement, you will find them urging the influence of Christ's merit on the gift of faith. The Scriptures "require indeed faith as an instrument of receiving the benefits of Christ's death ; but this very faith is the effect of Christ's meritorious death and prevalent intercession ; and is, of course, bestowed on all those for whom he shed his precious blood." "The death of Christ, considered in unison with his obedience, is the

meritorious cause of all spiritual blessings. It is therefore the cause of the gift of faith." It certainly is; but this has nothing to do with the extent of the atonement.

But notwithstanding these discrepancies, when our brethren come to speak of the real effects of the atonement on moral agents, they admit all that we plead for. This they do as often as they allow that the non-elect lose the benefit by their own fault; a point fully settled by the general consent of the Calvinistic world. The following is the testimony of the Synod of Dort, a body which for two centuries has been quoted as the oracle on the other side. "That many who are called by the gospel do not repent or believe in Christ, but perish in unbelief, does not arise from the want of the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross, nor from its insufficiency, but from their own fault."* Now if the non-elect have an atonement so within their reach that they are bound to use it for their benefit, and perish, not for want of an atonement, but by their own criminal rejection of it, then an atonement was provided for them as much as it could be for moral agents. The difference, therefore, is still about words.

The two questions, for whom did Christ atone? and for whom did he die? (meaning by the latter, whom did he intend to save by an operation on them as passive) require directly opposite answers; and from the different answers which they have received, men have appeared to each other to be contending for opposite systems, when in fact they were in the main only supporting different truths. The former question has been largely discussed by the divines of New England; the latter was agitated by the Synod of Dort. I will first take up the question in the shape in which it was handled by the synod.

CHAPTER III.

VIEW OF THE SUBJECT AS TAKEN BY THE SYNOD OF DORT.

THIS synod was convened at Dort in Holland, under the auspices of prince Maurice the stadtholder, by an order of the states-general dated November 11, 1617; and consisted of delegates from the different provinces of Holland, from Great-Britain, the Reformed churches of France and the French Netherlands, Switzerland, Geneva, the Palatinate, the Wetteraw, Hesse, Bremen, and Emden.

* Acts of the Synod of Dort. Part I. p. 290

For nearly twenty years the United Provinces had been agitated by the new doctrines broached by James Arminius, the celebrated founder of the sect which still bears his name.* “After his death the ministers who adhered to his cause formally seceded, and by an instrument which they called a remonstrance, and from which the party took the name of Remonstrants, put themselves under the protection of the states of the province of Holland and West-Friesland. This occurred in June, 1610. In the following August and September, several students in divinity being about to be examined before different classes, the Remonstrants drew up five articles (in opposition to predestination, limited atonement, total depravity, special grace, and the perseverance of the saints), and obtained an order from the states to the classes to require in the examination no other declaration on these subjects than a subscription to the articles. Thus arose into form and notice the celebrated Five Points.

After years of grievous contention this national synod was convened, for the purpose of settling all questions in dispute; with a particular order to discuss first of all the Five Points, and to refer all their decisions to the states-general for confirmation. The synod was opened on the thirteenth of November, 1618, and continued its sessions till the ninth of the following May.† They proceeded immediately to cite thirteen of the Remonstrants to appear and defend their doctrines. The cited obeyed the summons on the 6th of December, and were dismissed on the 21st of January. On the 24th of April, the synod deposed the thirteen pastors with some others, and enjoined it on the provincial synods, and the different classes and presbyteries, to proceed against the whole sect without delay, and not to suffer one of them to remain in office or in the communion of the church. All this was confirmed by the states-general in July following, by an order forbidding any doctrine contrary to the expositions of the synod to be taught in any of the churches, and enjoining it on all ecclesiastical bodies, governors of

* This extraordinary man was born in Holland in 1560, and was ordained pastor of a church in Amsterdam in 1588. In 1603 he was appointed to the divinity chair in the university of Leyden. From this time his opinions began to excite public attention, but they were not openly avowed till the year before his death, which occurred October 19, 1609. His eulogium was written in verse by the celebrated Grotius, who, together with Vossius and many other learned men, took a distinguished part in supporting the Arminian cause. The principal opponent was Francis Gomarus, from whom the orthodox party were sometimes called Gomarists. After the fall of the Arminian sect, Grotius was arrested by the order of prince Maurice and sentenced to imprisonment for life; but he escaped by the ingenuity of his wife, who had him conveyed from the fortress in a chest pretended to be filled with books.

† The president was John Bogerman, pastor of a church in Leuwarden, in West-Friesland, the residence of the prince of Orange.

colleges, professors, ministers, magistrates, and civil officers, to see the law carried into rigorous execution. The event was the imprisonment and banishment of the Arminian ministers, and the violent prostration of the whole party, agreeably to the intolerant principles common to all Europe in that day.

This is the synod, which, uniting in one voice the Calvinistic world, just one century after the commencement of the Reformation, has been appealed to ever since as the grand authority, next to the Bible, for deciding all questions in Calvinistic divinity.

The question respecting the design of Christ's death was brought before the synod in the following shape. The Arminians maintained that the mission of Christ placed all men in all respects on an equal footing, and left the rest to be done by the self-determining power of the will; that his death reconciled God to the whole human race, and by restoring their lapsed powers and the freedom of their will, placed them in a condition, with the aid of common grace, to work out their own salvation without any supernatural influence; that there was no decree or intention of God to apply the atonement to one more than another, and for aught he would do, the whole race might have perished after all. In short, the main question turned on predestination and the dependence of the human will.*

This the synod perceived, and shaped their answer accordingly. They say in the outset: "The remonstrants in this article do not treat of a new subject. For formerly the Semi-Pelagians of Marseilles and Syracuse maintained the same in these words: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ died for the universal human race, and no man is wholly excepted from the redemption of his blood, though he goes through this whole life with a mind most alienated from him: because the sacrament of mercy belongs to all men; by which very many are not renewed, for this reason, because they are foreknown to hold that it is useless to be renewed. As far, therefore, as belongs to God, eternal life is provided for all; but as far as appertains to the freedom of the will, it is obtained by those who of their own accord believe in God, and receive the aid of grace through the merit of believing. In which article, although in appearance they amplified the grace of God and the redemption of Christ, they in truth diminished both, ascribing to God indiscriminate grace, to Christ the merit of redemption, to freewill the efficacy of both: and while they would overturn the doctrine of predestination, which the apostolic Austin defended, they in truth tore up the foundation of the whole gospel, attributing the cause of faith and perseverance, and

* Acts of Synod, Part I. p. 129, 130, 246, 247; Part II. p. 129.

therefore of human salvation, to God and Christ indiscriminately, to the humor and will of man determinately. —

“In like manner these, while in this article about the obtaining of reconciliation with God for all men through the death of Christ, they in appearance amplify the grace of Christ’s death, do in truth the same thing that those did; and while they think to tear up from its foundation the apostolic predestination of God (which discriminates those who are to be saved from those who are not to be saved), to introduce in opposition to it their own eventual predestination, of those who of their own accord believe and persevere, or determine themselves to faith and perseverance, a predestination posterior to faith and perseverance (which in truth ought to be called post-destination instead of pre-destination), they do, by making the human will the governor of resistible grace, and subjecting reconciliation through the death of Christ to the will of men, completely deprive faith of all grace, and weaken the consolation to be derived from the death of Christ.”*

The synod then proceed to consider at large the purpose of the Sacred Persons; and while they admit that Christ died, and willed to die, for all in respect to the sufficiency of his ransom, they deny that it was his purpose or the purpose of the Father actually to save the whole race.†

When they oppose the unqualified assertion of the remonstrants that Christ died for all, they explain their meaning, and plainly tell us that it is the intention as to the final result that they deny. “To die for any one,” say they, “is properly to free him from death by one’s own death or to die in his place that he may live; as appears from 2 Sam. 18: 33. Would God I had died for thee! that is, in thy place that thou mightest have lived.”‡

They object also to the assertion of the remonstrants, that Christ reconciled God to the whole world, and obtained remission of sins for all and each.§ This obtaining by request (for such is the meaning of the word *impetratio* which the remonstrants had used), cannot, say the delegates from South-Holland, be separated from the application: “for an obtaining by request (as lawyers, the best interpreters of the meaning of words, confess), includes and presupposes a concession of the thing solicited. Thus with them an obtained rescript is when the prince has granted and the supplicant has gained. And in our common language, when we say an office or benefit has been obtained by request for any one, we mean not only that the right to that benefit has been obtained, but the actual possession and concession of it.”||

“This whole thing,” say the delegates from West Friesland, “which

* Part I. p. 246, 247.

† p. 248.

‡ Part I. p. 247.

§ p. 248, 249.

|| Part III. p. 145.

they have endeavored to hide and bring in under the fringe of this article, lurks in this, that, not content with the received doctrine of the sufficiency of Christ's death, they have invented such an obtaining of remission of sins for all and each as is separated from all participation of remission ; where we must particularly note, that when they propose to treat of the death and satisfaction of Christ, of its fruits and efficacy, and the blessings obtained by it, they do not explain the manner of the satisfaction, nor make any mention of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for instance, of faith, perseverance, and the restoration of the divine image within us, or of the renovation of our nature ; by which they suggest, what elsewhere they plainly bring out, that Christ obtained salvation that there might be a possibility of the remission of sins and of the reconciliation of men to God, but that all participation of that good is suspended on their performing, of their own accord, the prescribed conditions, that is, on man and his freewill." *

"Here it is to be noted," say the delegates from the synod of Groningen and Omlands, "that the question is not about the sufficiency of Christ's death: for we affirm without hesitation, that the sacrifice of Christ possesses so great power and value that it is abundantly sufficient to atone for the sins of all men, as well actual as original ; and that no one of the reprobate perishes for want of the death of Christ, or through its insufficiency : but the question is, whether, according to the intention of God the Father and Son, remission of sins and reconciliation with God were actually obtained for more than the elect." †

From these extracts it appears what the chief points of dispute between the synod and the remonstrants were. The question was by no means the same that is agitated at the present day, but turned chiefly on the intention of the divine mind as to the application of the atonement, and the strange notions brought forward to disprove special grace ; in other words, on predestination and the dependence of the human will. And though those venerable fathers, from the kind of opponents they had to deal with, were more cautious than we are in the use of universal terms, and on the nature of the atonement sometimes lost themselves in figurative language, chiefly from not distinguishing between atonement and the higher ransom ; yet on the whole they can scarcely be said to be contending with us ; for I shall show in another place, by copious extracts from their reasonings, that they fully admitted all the great principles which support our conclusion.

And now in return I will acknowledge and vindicate all that they defended against the inroads of the Arminians. This I will do under the following heads.

* Part III. p. 173.

† p. 193.

(1) A part of the human race were elected in Christ, and chosen to salvation by his death, before the foundation of the world. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will." "Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The non-elect are those "whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain." Eph. 1: 3-5. 2 Tim. 1: 9. 1 Pet. 1: 2. Rev. 13: 8. 17: 8.

(2) This number were promised and given to Christ as the reward of his obedience "unto death." Their salvation was promised him. "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect,—in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began." Promised to whom? no man was there to receive the pledge: promised undoubtedly to Christ. They were given to him. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.—And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me.—I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.—Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.—Those that thou gavest me I have kept." John 6: 37, 39. 17: 6-12. Tit. 1: 1, 2. They were given to him as a reward of his obedience "unto death." This has been proved in a former chapter, and will be still further established in the Appendix. They were given him to be through sanctification the copartners of his inheritance. It was foreordained in the decree of election that he should be "the first-born among many brethren," and share with them the inheritance of the universe. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." And among the reasons for conferring on him, in reward of his obedience, the dominion of the universe, a leading one was, that he might complete the salvation of his elect. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." "Him hath God exalted—to be a Prince and

a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." John 17: 2. Acts 5: 31. Rom. 8: 29.

(3) The salvation of the elect was that part of Christ's personal reward which had a principal influence in inducing him to die. It was an important part of "the joy that was set before him," in view of which he "endured the cross, despising the shame." Heb. 12: 2. This prospect, which so much influenced his own mind through his whole course, it was natural for him to allude to while seated in the bosom of his family. With his eye on Calvary, and with the joy of millions rising before him, he unbosomed to his disciples this great motive, which urged him to the cross. "I lay down my life for the sheep.—And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring." Then turning to the Jews, "But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." John 10: 3–29. It has been already remarked, that by sheep is primarily meant, not the unregenerate elect, but believers. The fold is that which is enclosed by the pale of the church, and the flock are the church considered as an assembly of believers gathered together in Christ. And here the sheep "hear" the porter's "voice," and "know his voice," and "follow him," "and a stranger will they not follow." The elect Gentiles are therefore called sheep plainly by way of anticipation. But still as there is an evident allusion to the election of the sheep, I cannot but think that Christ intended to express, not that the sins of the elect would be atoned for more than others, but that in the motive which prompted him to the sacrifice, he had a special reference to the salvation of the elect as a part of his promised reward. By a similar anticipation the unregenerate elect appear to be called the children of God, and a similar reference to them seems to be expressed in the following passage: "This spoke he [Caiaphas], not of himself [not at his own suggestion], but being high-priest that year [and in honor of his office being visited with a temporary inspiration], he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." John 11: 51, 52. By running back the contrary way, believers, under the name of the church, appear to be spoken of with reference to their previous elect character in the following passage: "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5: 25–27. Some suppose that the sanctified and the children are spoken of under the character of elect in the following place: "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them

brethren [and children]. — Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might — deliver them." Heb. 2 : 11–15. And in the following : "For their sakes [they were believers at the time, but it is supposed to refer to them as elect], I sanctify myself [devote myself to die], that they also might be sanctified through the truth." John 17 : 19. There are other passages which plainly declare that Christ, by the merit of his obedience "unto death" obtained the gift of the Spirit as his reward, and thus became our "sanctification and redemption," and saved "his people from their sins," and accomplished the double purpose of purging our "conscience from dead works to serve the living God." "Who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world." "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation, — but with the precious blood of Christ; — who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who by him do believe in God." "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and (having made peace through the blood of his cross), by him to reconcile all things unto himself. — And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight." Matt. 1 : 21. Luke 1 : 71–75. 1 Cor. 1 : 30. Gal. 1 : 4. Col. 1 : 19–22. Tit. 2 : 14. Heb. 9 : 14. 1 Pet. 1 : 18–21.

Indeed, nothing is more evident than that the merit of Christ in actively giving himself to die, obtained the sanctification of the elect as his reward, and that the prospect of this reward, so gratifying to his benevolence from the direct love which he bore them, constituted one of the leading motives which urged him to the cross; that he died to secure this interest, so peculiarly his own as one of the contracting parties, much in the same sense as a man performs a prescribed task for a stipulated recompense. But this has nothing to do with the extent of the atonement, nor with any question relative to its equal bearing on moral agents.

This distinction between expiation and the claim of merit to a reward appears not to have been made by either party in the days of Dort. The remonstrants in particular were totally blind to all that influence of Christ which went in to constitute the higher ransom. So far from saying with them, that his only influence and end was to render God able

and willing to establish with men a covenant of grace,* I say and insist, that so far as services could earn a stipulated reward, he actually "purchased" the salvation of every individual of his elect, and had a right to claim it at the hands of justice. They who overlook, or fail to dwell largely on this glorious truth, will be in danger of crowding Christ too much out of their religion. To turn the eye of the mind full upon it, to admit the whole view, and to dwell upon it with devout and grateful transport, will, as every one can testify who has tried the experiment, open more fully and affectingly to view, that which all must see is the great subject-matter of the Bible, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, to the salvation of men.

CHAPTER IV.

ATONEMENT FOR MORAL AGENTS ONLY.

NONE but moral agents bear any relation to law, obligation, guilt, pardon, rewards, or punishments; and none else can bear any relation to an atonement which was intended to support law, to expiate guilt, and to lay a foundation for pardon. The passive had not sinned; the passive needed no pardon. The only way in which passive receivers of sanctifying impressions could be affected by an atonement was indirectly, by its removing the curse of abandonment, which sinning agents had incurred. But even this was accomplished by a mere operation on the relations of agents. The whole force of the atonement was spent on those relations.

This is what we mean when we say, that the atonement was a measure of moral government. A moral government is only the treatment which God renders to moral agents. As he stands related to creatures in this character, he is the moral Governor. Now the atonement was plainly an expedient of the moral Governor to support the moral law (the constitution of a moral government), and thus to open a way for the pardon of sinning agents. The satisfaction was demanded by the Protector of the law, and was rendered to him who holds the rights of justice (as all acknowledge who talk of satisfying justice), and was accepted by him who otherwise was determined to punish sin. In every point of view it was a measure adopted by God in the character in which he stands related to moral agents.

* Acts of the Synod of Dort, Part II. p. 139.

Thus the atonement spent its force on the relations of agents, and, except by way of consequence, had no effect on men in any other character.

But it was for agents in another respect; it was a provision for them. By a provision for moral agents is always meant a means of instruction, holiness, usefulness, or happiness, which they may improve, and are under obligations to improve, and on the improvement of which as a *sine qua non* the benefit depends. Here I must introduce a principle, which I shall have occasion to display more at large hereafter. A moral agent must be contemplated as a whole, as possessing that entire assemblage of attributes which constitute him such, and not as one maimed of half his qualities. His essential properties cannot be divided. Now one of the things which essentially belong to him is, that he must act, and on his action his happiness depends. One cannot be a moral agent without falling under this law. You cannot therefore contemplate a man as needing an atonement, without contemplating him as one, who, if he has opportunity, is to act towards the atonement, and is to enjoy or lose the benefit, according as he receives or rejects it. If you keep up the idea of a moral agent, you cannot separate these things. Any thing therefore which is done for a moral agent is done for his use after the manner in which things are for the use of free moral agents, or creatures governed by motives and choice, and bound to act. That is, it is done that he may use it if he pleases, and that he may be under obligation to use it. Unless the effect is thus suspended on his agency, the thing is not prepared for him as an agent. No matter what other provision which respects the same creature as passive has secured the action of the agent; yet the provision for the agent necessarily suspends a good on his own conduct. Now as an agent must not be divided, whatever is done for him in a way to affect his relations, makes a provision for him as an agent, that is, a provision for him to improve. And all that is gained by changing his relations (so far as the pure agent is contemplated), is to bring a good so within his reach that he may enjoy it if he will accept it, and must accept it to enjoy it. It cannot be for an agent in a higher sense. In a higher sense it may be for the man, for under that name both the active and passive characters are included. The atonement could not be a provision for a guilty agent, without having changed his relations as a transgressor; it could not change his relations as a transgressor, without being (besides removing the penal bar to regeneration) a provision for a moral agent to improve; provided men are ever in a holy manner to seek sanctification of God and to receive it as a gracious reward, and provided the consistency of their pardon always depends on their turning from sin.

Thus the atonement was for moral agents in two inseparable respects ; it affected their relations, and was a provision for them to improve. And it was for men in no other character, except by way of consequence.

CHAPTER V

THE TWO CHARACTERS OF MAN DISTINCT AND INDEPENDENT OF EACH OTHER.

THE moment we have found that the atonement was for none but moral agents, we refuse to take any further notice of mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions ; that is, we refuse to take into account, in settling for whom as agents atonement was made, whether the same persons as passive were predestined to be regenerated ; and the reason is, that these two characters are altogether distinct and independent of each other, and what is true of the one is none the less true for any thing which concerns the other. This is the corner-stone of the whole system, and requires to be laid with firmness and care.

The foundation of the whole divine administration towards the human race lies in this, that men sustain two relations to God. As creatures they are necessarily dependent on him for holiness, as they are for existence, and as such they passively receive his sanctifying impressions ; and they are moral agents. Now the great truth to be proved is, that these two characters of men (passive receivers and moral agents) are altogether distinct and independent of each other. And the proof is found in the single fact, that their moral agency is in no degree impaired or affected by their dependence and passiveness, nor their passiveness and dependence by their moral agency. That is to say, they are none the less dependent (as Arminians would make us believe) for being moral agents ; and on the other hand (and this is the main point to be proved), they are none the less moral agents (as Antinomians seem to suppose), that is, are none the less susceptible of personal and complete obligations, for being dependent. For instance, they are none the less bound to believe because faith is "the gift of God," nor to love because love is "the fruit of the Spirit." Their obligations rest on their capacity to exercise, not on their power to originate ; on their being rational, not on their being independent. On the one hand, the action of the Spirit does not abate their freedom. The soul of man is that wonderful substance which is none the less active for being acted upon, none the less free for being

controlled. It is a wheel within a wheel, which has complete motion in itself while moved by the machinery without. While made "*willing*," it is itself voluntary, and of course free. On the other hand, the absence of the Spirit does not impair the capacity on which obligation is founded. The completeness of moral agency has no dependence on supernatural impressions, and on nothing but a rational existence combined with knowledge. The bad, equally with the good, are complete moral agents, the one being as deserving of blame as the other are of praise; otherwise (which forever settles the question), the unsanctified are not to blame and cannot be punished. To deny that men are under obligations to be good without a divine influence, would plunge you into this trilemma: you must resort to the old Arminian dogma of the self-determining power, or you must prove that God answers unholy prayers, or you must boldly affirm that totally depraved sinners are under no obligations to be holy. For how can they be under obligation to be holy through a divine influence, unless they can obtain that influence by an unholy prayer, or can originate a better spirit of supplication by the self-determining power? What, then, are men to be sent forth in their own strength? No, but they are bound to feel perfectly right at once, and with that temper to cast themselves on God for security against a future abuse of their agency, a future violation of their obligations. They are bound to feel perfectly right at once, and with that temper to acknowledge their absolute dependence: for on the one hand that would only be a confession of the truth, and on the other we know, from facts which fill the universe, that their dependence is no abatement of their obligations.

This is the very point from which have proceeded one half of the disputes of the Christian church. They have all arisen from the difficulty of familiarizing to the mind the consistency between dependence and obligation, passiveness and freedom. Illumine this inch-square, and the whole farrago of metaphysical litigation would vanish. Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, Arminians, Semi-Arminians, and Semi-Calvinists would no longer tremble at the idea of absolute dependence as destructive of freedom, nor would fatalists infer from that dependence that men are machines.

That these two characters are each perfect in itself and unaffected by the other, is no less evident than that creatures can deserve praise and blame. As creatures they must be dependent on the Spirit; and to be susceptible of praise and blame is the very definition of a moral agent.

The character of agents as distinct from recipients is sufficiently entire in itself, and at the same time sufficiently real and important to be the basis of the whole fabric of a moral government. The whole structure is obviously founded in this truth, that men are complete moral agents without supernatural influence, and none the less for their dependence. God

does not command or invite them to come on condition that they are drawn, but lays upon them the obligation without reference to the action of the Spirit. He does not threaten or punish them because they fail to receive his influence, but because they do not act. He makes experiments upon them, he presents instructions and motives, he charges them with privileges, just as though they were independent.

On this principle he proceeds in his commands. He requires all rational creatures to be holy, sanctified or unsanctified. He lays this command on angels; for what is their holiness but conformity to his will? He lays this command on good men; and without reference to any spiritual assistance, says, "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent." He lays this command on the worst of hypocrites, and without the least abatement for their dependence, says: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom;—wash ye, make you clean;—cease to do evil, learn to do well." He lays this command on a profligate world, on millions who will never be sanctified; for he "commandeth all men everywhere to repent." He lays this command on devils; or devils do not at present sin; "for sin is the transgression of the law," and "where no law is there is no transgression." Rom. 4: 15. 1 John 3: 4. Indeed, if in any acts of authority God was limited by his dominion over the mind, he could never command further than he makes "willing," and of course could never have an opportunity to punish.

On this principle he proceeds in the dispensation of rewards and punishments. Without reference to any divine influence exerted or withheld, he will say at last, "Come, ye blessed;—for I was a hungered and ye gave me meat.—Depart, ye cursed;—for I was a hungered and ye gave me no meat." "Because I—called and ye refused,—I also will laugh at your calamity."

On this principle he proceeds in all his invitations, promises, threatenings, and expostulations. "He that believeth—shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" "O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries." "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!—I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!"

On this principle he proceeds in all his experiments upon the human character. "Then said the lord of the vineyard, what shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be that they will reverence him."

“Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” Not a hint of any influence from without but simple cultivation; the issue was suspended on the intrinsic energy of the tree. These representations have been considered as made after the manner of men, but in truth they are the natural language of one agent making experiments upon other distinct and complete agents. Specimens of the same sort may be seen in the parables of the talents and the pounds.

On this principle he proceeds in estimating the opportunities and privileges of men, and in assigning the cause of their destruction. “My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein. And he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.—What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?” “There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.—And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen that they might receive the fruits of it.—Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, they will reverence my son.” “Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?” “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved.” “Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” They “that were bidden to the wedding” “would not come.” “His citizens hated him and sent a message after him, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us.—Those my enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.”

Thus Gabriel and Paul, and Christians on earth, are complete moral agents, and are bound to act, irrespectively of the spiritual influence by which they are moved; and wicked men and devils are complete moral agents, and are bound to be holy, without the Spirit, and none the less for their dependence. Neither the dependence of men therefore, nor the gift or withholding of the Spirit, needs to be taken into account in any declaration concerning them as moral agents, or concerning the outward privileges which belong to them as such. Moral agents, so to speak,

are complete entities in themselves, without respect to the passive character belonging to the same creatures.

These two characters of men are about as distinct as body and soul. Like body and soul they are united together in the same person; and this gives them a necessary relation to each other (resembling that between body and soul), in the three following respects.

(1) The soul is stimulated to action by what is needed by the body, and by what is done for the body; and agents are excited to holy action by motives drawn from the dependence of creatures, and from the decrees and operations of God respecting them as passive. God himself draws motives from election and regeneration to move them to submission, adoration, gratitude, and praise.

(2) The soul is bound to act in view of the wants of the body, and in view of what is done for the body; to ask God for blessings on the body, and to thank him for those blessings when conferred: and men are bound to act in view of their dependence, and towards God as related to passive subjects of decrees and impressions. They are bound to acknowledge their dependence, to pray for the Spirit on themselves and others, to be thankful for influences already received, to believe and acquiesce in the decree of election, to thank God for their own election as far as it is known, and to submit the fate of the wicked to his sovereign disposal. God himself commands these things.

(3) The soul is rewarded and punished by what is done to the body; and the dependence of men constitutes a sort of capacity for rewards and punishments. God promises them his influence as a gracious recompense, and bestows it in answer to prayer, in fulfilment of a covenant, or as a general token of favor; in all which you may trace the idea of reward. The whole process of sanctification after the first act of faith seems to be of this nature; for however sovereign it may be in point of time, manner, and degree, it was in general promised to the first act of faith, and is certainly a token of favor. On the other hand, God withholds from men his influence, and abandons them to judicial blindness and tormenting passions by way of punishment.

Regeneration can never be the reward of the person regenerated, for before the change he had nothing worthy of recompense. But the regeneration of one person may be the reward of another. It may be a recompense to Christ, a token of favor to a parent or minister, a fulfilment of a covenant with the church, or an answer to prayer. On the other hand, regenerating influence may be withheld from one as the punishment of another. So, to keep up the comparison already begun, the soul of one may be rewarded or punished by what is done to the body of another.

In these three respects the two characters stand related to each other. These, then, may be considered as exceptions ; and to save repetition I shall hereafter refer to them as such. But with these three exceptions, the two characters are as disconnected and independent of each other as though they belonged to two separate persons. A provision for one is as distinct from every thing relating to the other, as a provision for the soul is distinct from a garment for the body. Accordingly, with the above exceptions, God, in his whole treatment of moral agents, proceeds without the least apparent reference to the dependence of the same creatures on the Spirit, and shapes all his measures, to all appearance, as though he had no control over the mind but by motives. This he does even in regard to good men. He lays upon them obligations irrespective of the influence which he has covenanted to bestow. But as the influence in this case is really a reward to holy agents, I shall take no further notice of it, but shall confine myself to the regenerating power. This, as it relates to the subject of the change, is certainly no part of the treatment of moral agents. To him it is not a reward, and has no respect to any thing he has ever done. This, then, and the decree concerning it, are clearly without the pale of a moral government, and may be set in distinct contrast with the whole treatment of agents.* These are the two points of opposition which I wish to set up ; — election and regeneration on the one hand, and a moral government on the other. And what I assert is, that in all the treatment of moral agents and in all the provisions for them, God acts, with the exceptions already made, without the least apparent reference to election or regeneration.

I have shown you two independent characters on earth. If God acts towards these according to truth, there will be a counterpart of them in the heavens ; he himself will sustain two characters (with the exceptions already made), altogether independent of each other. As he stands related to the moral agent, he is the Moral Governor ; as he stands related to the mere passive receiver, he is the Sovereign Efficient Cause. I say, then, if he acts towards these two independent characters of man according to truth, the Moral Governor will appear in his operations independent of the Sovereign Efficient Cause. And so it is. No one can open his Bible without seeing these two independent and seemingly opposite characters in every page. In one place you hear God speaking as one who has absolute control over the mind, and cannot be disappointed : “ My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” “ The king’s

* The decree of election was a reward to Christ, and a part of a moral government in relation to him ; and the regeneration of a child may be the reward of a parent, and so a part of a moral government to him. But the child is not treated as an agent in the process, but as a mere passive receiver.

heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water ; he turneth it whithersoever he will : ” in another, you see him a supplicant at the doors of men, earnestly striving to reform them, with no power or instrument in his hand but motives ; and you see him, after exhausting his means, retiring from the field apparently disappointed and grieved. “ As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die ? ” “ O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways ! ” “ How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. ” “ O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end ! ” “ What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it ? This is not the language of figure, nor any thing after the manner of men in such a sense as to prevent it from being the plainest and simplest dialect of a moral government. These two characters, which appear everywhere as distinct as though they belonged to two separate beings, will account for all that diversity of language in the sacred Scriptures which has given rise to so many opposite systems. Out of these different exhibitions of God most of the metaphysical disputes have arisen. One class of men, fastening their eyes on one of these characters, have in different degrees excluded election and special grace ; while another class, too much confining their attention to the other character, have proportionably overlooked a moral government. But the grand key to unlock every difficulty is found in this, that one of these characters stands related to men as moral agents, and the other to men as passive receivers of sanctifying impressions ; and the latter two being distinct and independent of each other, the former two, to accord with truth, must be equally so.

These two characters of God are not only distinct, but in some respects are opposite to each other. In one character God wills to suffer men to sin, when his influence could easily prevent ; in the other he earnestly forbids them to sin, and urges all the motives in the universe to dissuade them. In one character he wills to suffer men to perish, when his influence could easily prevent ; in the other he swears by his life that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that they turn and live ; and then presses them to return as though his own existence was at stake. In one character he determined before the non-elect were made that they should be left to destruction ; in the other he would have us to understand that he made them from the purest benevolence ; and to confirm this, he has spread an ocean of atoning blood between them and perdition, and follows them with his entreaties even to the gates of hell. Nothing

but the confounding of these two characters, or rather the annihilation of that of Moral Governor, prevents men from seeing that God could provide an atonement for the non-elect: and, that character annihilated, there is no avoiding the broad and unqualified assertion that he made them to be damned. Contemplate God in a single character, and there is no vindicating the sincerity of his invitations to the non-elect; for then the whole that can be said is, that he presses those to live whom he has unchangeably doomed to destruction. Not a word of explanation can be offered; and it is as though a man, sustaining a single character, should pursue the same contradictory course. But view God in this double character, founded on the double relations of men, and admit that their capacity is a sufficient ground of treating them as distinct and independent agents, and all is plain. In short, this distinction between the active and passive characters of man, and between the corresponding characters of God, will clear up very many difficulties which are otherwise insolvable.* To blend them would introduce endless confusion into every part

* I am so convinced that this distinction will clear up most of the solvable difficulties in metaphysical theology, that I could wish to see some abler pen pursue the subject through all its ramifications. I have only time to drop the following hints as a specimen:—

(1) The seemingly contradictory language which runs through the Bible is thus explained. In one form God speaks as related to agents, with nothing but motives to employ; in the other, as related to passive subjects of sanctifying impressions, over whom he has absolute control.

(2) It reveals the consistency between dependence and freedom. Freedom is the unrestrained exertion of our own agency. Dependence leaves our agency entire, and of course unshackled.

(3) The consistency between decrees and free agency. Decrees do not touch us until they are executed upon us by the power of motives, or by an influence to mould our disposition. If we follow motives we are voluntary and free: if our hearts are moulded by a divine influence, we are only dependent. As men have all the attributes of agents none the less for what befalls them as passive, God may make and execute a decree concerning the passive and leave agents free.

(4) The consistency between election and the fact that all may come. Election only respects the passive, coming is the act of an agent. Election only touches the question whether we shall be disposed to come; it does not interfere with the fact that if we come we shall be received.

(5) The consistency between election and a fair chance for all. Fair chance is predicable only of an agent, and is where a blessing is so put within his reach that he may enjoy it by doing his duty. Election only respects the question whether he shall be inclined to do his duty.

(6) The difference between God's secret or decretive and his revealed or preceptive will. The former respects the passive (except so far as it is to be executed by motives); the latter, agents.

(7) The propriety of exhorting sinners to repent and believe, and not merely to use

of the divine administration. And to fill the eye with one to the exclusion of the other, and to build on that a system of religion, would lead to the most destructive heresies. Cover man's dependence on the Spirit, and we are Pelagians: take away his moral agency, and the government of God degenerates into stoical fate. The only difference between the Calvinistic doctrine of decrees and the stoical doctrine of fate is found in the distinct, complete, and free agency of man, by which he differs from a mere machine.

These operations of the Moral Governor and Sovereign Efficient Cause may be called the two great departments of the divine administration. And they are so distinct that when a man opens his eyes in one, he cannot, so to speak, see the other. If standing in one department, a Christian should ask why he obtained mercy, the question would be, why he was regenerated: and the answer would be, because God has "mercy on whom he will have mercy." If standing in the other, he asks the same question, the inquiry will be, why he was not punished with judicial blindness, and why he was not debarred when he applied for pardon: and the answer will be, on the one hand, because he had not committed the unpardonable sin, and on the other, because God wished to glorify his grace for the encouragement of others who should be disposed to apply. It was in the latter department that Paul stood when he contemplated the reasons of the mercy extended to him. "I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.—For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him." When the great preacher of election opened his mouth on such a subject, you might expect to hear, among the antecedent causes, something of that electing decree and of the gift of that soul to Christ. Not a hint or breath of any such thing. He seems never to have heard of election. The only reasons assigned why he himself was not actually left to go down to the pit are these two; that his knowledge had not been sufficient to render his sin unpardonable, and that God wished to make him a monument of mercy for the encouragement of

means and do the best they can. Their moral agency and obligations are not impaired by their dependence, nor by the absence of the Spirit.

(8) We see what it is which constitutes the difference in the tenor of different preachers. Some dwell more on the duties of agents, or morality, others more on the aid secured for the passive, calling on men to cast themselves on Christ and the covenant. And by keeping in view the two characters of man, we may see why and how far both methods ought to be pursued. As to the reason why, the whole man ought to be addressed: as to the proportion of bearing on the respective characters, not enough on the one hand to make legalists, not enough on the other to make Antinomians. To omit to notice, or to lay too much stress on either character, will lead to some error of head or heart.

other returning sinners. So perfectly distinct are the two departments, like two different worlds, and so impossible, when a man opens his eyes in one, even to see the other. And this is the difficulty with our brethren. Their eyes are so immovably fixed in the department of the Sovereign Efficient Cause, that they never go out of it to contemplate a moral government in relation to the atonement. They ask, in the light of their favorite department, why Simon Magus perished; and they answer truly, because he was not elected. If they would go into the other department and ask the same question, the answer would be, because he rejected the remedy which was so brought within his reach that he could not lose it without enormous guilt; in other words, because he rejected an atonement which was prepared for him as a moral agent.

The Moral Governor, with the exceptions already made, proceeds in all his administration without the least apparent reference to election and regeneration, and constructs his measures just as though men were independent. The reason is, there is in man, regarded purely as an agent (which he completely is when separated from the sovereign influences of the Spirit), a full foundation for all the treatment and measures which are fitted to moral agents. A measure for a moral agent is complete without being so shaped as to have a manifest bearing on the same man in a character in which he is not an agent. Nor can it be so shaped without ceasing to be a simple measure for a moral agent. And the being who brings it forward, if he speaks according to truth, must simply declare it intended for the moral agent, and must say no more. The measure may be expected, by way of consequence, to affect the man in another character; and the author of the measure may so declare: but in explaining the direct and proper influence of the measure itself, he cannot in truth allude to any but a moral agent. Accordingly the Moral Governor, with the exceptions already made, proceeds through the whole of his administration as though the other department did not exist. Particularly in contemplating the privileges of men, as we have seen, he appears to have no knowledge of election or regeneration whatever.

Now the atonement was certainly provided by the Moral Governor, because it was a provision for moral agents. It follows, then, that in making this provision he had no regard to the distinction of elect and non-elect. An atonement made for agents could know nothing of passive regeneration or any decree concerning it.

When I say this of the Moral Governor, I do not apply it to the Divine Mind unlimitedly, but only to God in that character in which he stands related to moral agents. If it be asked respecting God unlimitedly, whether he would have provided an atonement if he had not determined to bestow the gift of faith and consequent salvation on the elect, I

am willing to answer, no. Not that it would have been inconsistent for him to have treated the whole race as mere agents, as he now treats a part (allowing wisdom to have seen a reason for so doing); but I suppose that he would not have entered on a system of mercy towards a world without intending to glorify himself in both characters, and to gratify his benevolence more fully than he could have done by the operations of the Moral Governor alone. But certainly the salvation of the elect was not all that he intended to gain. He had a purpose to answer towards the non-elect as subjects of moral government, much the same that he accomplishes by giving them laws. He has ends to answer by a benignant government over agents, wholly distinct from any which he attains by sanctifying impressions on the heart. All this is said of God unlimitedly. But in the foregoing remarks respecting the Moral Governor, I referred not to the secret motives of the Divine Mind, much less to any purposes respecting the passive, but to the avowed designs of God in bringing forward a measure for the benefit of moral agents.

I admit also that God in his secret covenant, in which he treated about men as passive recipients of sanctifying impressions, had much to do with election, and that too in preparing the way for the atonement. He gave the elect to Christ as a reward for the merit of his obedience in making expiation. But that secret transaction, as I expect to show in the next chapter, did not provide the atonement, by giving to the death of Christ its expiating virtue. This was done by the public transactions, in all which God appeared as the Moral Governor. It was the Moral Governor who commanded the Son to die, and laid upon him the stroke; who thus, as the Protector of the law, demanded and received satisfaction; who accepted the offering, and pronounced it accepted by the resurrection of Christ. It was he who came forward with the atonement before the world, declared the purpose for which it was made, and offered it to men as a provision of his own. It was the Moral Governor, then, who appointed, provided, and produced the atonement. And what I mean is, that in all these public transactions he had no declared reference to elect or non-elect, but appeared as one bringing forward a measure solely for moral agents, to be indiscriminately applied to all who as agents would believe.

CHAPTER VI.

NOTHING BELONGED TO THE ATONEMENT BUT WHAT WAS PUBLIC.

THE greatest mistake of all has lain in the supposition that the secret covenant between the Father and Son gave to the atonement its influence and power, like a contract between two merchants respecting the purchase of goods. This representation carries too much the appearance of something mercenary and selfish on the part of the Father, as though the thing demanded was merely to gratify his own personal feelings. All the statements about the pearl paid in secret, or by a secret understanding, for the redemption of a hundred of the thousand prisoners, are of this nature. Where the thing demanded is money or a precious stone, to gratify a private and personal feeling, the contract which gives it all its claim may be made in secret. But the Father had no such individual feeling to gratify. He had no desire or demand but for an operation upon public law for the benefit of the universe. Nothing could have the least influence to satisfy him but that operation upon public law. The arguments on the other side constantly assume that the atonement was offered and accepted secretly for a certain number. But it was not offered or accepted secretly. The offering was among the most public transactions of the universe; and the acceptance was no less notorious than the resurrection of Christ, the proclamations of the gospel, and the acquittal of the saints in glory. And had it been offered and accepted privately, as the pearl is represented to have been, it could have had no effect.

We are now upon a track which will lead to an easy decision of the question. The atonement was certainly a measure exclusively for moral agents, and therefore was provided by the Moral Governor. But in that secret covenant God was not the Moral Governor towards men, but the sovereign efficient cause: in other words, he did not treat about men as moral agents, but about men as passive receivers of regenerating influence. He only promised that the elect should be made to believe, and thus be brought into that pale where remission would meet all indiscriminately who should enter. This covenant, then, was no part of the provision of the Moral Governor for moral agents.

Nor did this covenant give to the atonement any of its influence upon the relations of moral agents. So far as it was a contract for something which should have this effect, it was merely a stipulation that there should be an atonement; but the matter and influence of the atonement were the same as though such a stipulation had never been, except that without the consent of the Son his subjection and sufferings would neither

have been possible nor just. That covenant was the mere yielding of consent on the part of the Son, and the fixing of his reward on the part of the Father. That might have been all, and the elect might have been pardoned as a reward or favor to Christ without his sufferings, had it not been necessary for the honor of the law to produce a change in their legal relations as agents. This was the proper and exclusive office of the atonement. The whole of this was done by the public command to the Son to die, the public infliction of the stroke upon him, and the public explanation of the design. These public transactions were the whole which constituted an atonement for Peter. It was not a secret contract about him as passive, nor a secret stipulation that there should be an atonement, but a public offering for him as an agent, which rendered it consistent with the honor of the law for him to be pardoned when he should believe. And besides removing the curse of abandonment, this was all that atonement did for Peter: for it is not atonement which creates the fact that men are pardoned; that is done by the intervention of another influence, which secures to them the gift of faith. It was the public transactions, and not a private treaty, which made it to be an atonement for him. The meaning of its being offered for him is, not that God designed it for the benefit of the man by an operation on him as passive, but that the public transactions gave it a bearing on him as an agent, that is, on his legal relations. In determining, then, for whom or how many it was offered, we have not to consult the secret covenant, but only to look on the face of the public transactions. It could not be for Peter further than it was made to be for him by the public transactions; and it was for as many as the public transactions made it to be. It was to exert its whole influence upon public law. That influence was wholly derived from the open and avowed bearing of the thing upon agents and their relations; that is, upon creatures who had sinned and who must act, and on whose action the effect must depend. And it was for as many agents as by that public bearing it rendered pardonable if they would believe. The public explanation which gave it that bearing, then, is the only instrument which contains the express purpose. The whole that we mean, therefore, when we say that the atonement was for all, is, that it was stated in the public instrument to be for every man indiscriminately who would believe, and that it became a provision for all by the bearing it took from this public statement.

Let us look again at the case of the prince of Wales. The whole end to be accomplished by his atonement was, a public conviction that forgers should die. How could that conviction be wrought on the multitude by any secret purpose of the prince or his father, or by any secret agreement between them? Allowing the king to have power to change the

hearts of the criminals, and to have made some private promise to the prince on that subject, what has this to do with public law, or with rendering it safe to pardon the men after they are reclaimed? The whole that was to accomplish this must be public. And if the death of the prince could do nothing without an express purpose, we see at once where that express purpose must be found, and in what form. It must not be found in the secret covenant between the parties (it might as well be nowhere), but in the public proclamation. And it must not be about the formation of the character (allowing such a power to exist), but about the pardon of the criminals. Admit now that the death of the prince could not convince the public that forgers would die if it shielded any who continued to transgress: then the proclamation must be, that he dies to obtain the pardon of the culprits provided they reform. This done, if the life of the prince is known to be as valuable in the eyes of the government as that of the ten, not a man in England will dread the authority of the law the less, if all the ten reform and live. There is, then, a full atonement for the ten, though in the event but five accept the offer.

But still the mind cleaves to the idea of some secret sense in which the satisfaction was offered and accepted. Let us therefore pause a little longer on this thought. After Christ had openly and professedly died in the room of all in such a sense that all might be pardoned if they would believe, how by any secret understanding or compact could he atone in any higher or other sense for the elect? A thousand private purposes and agreements, and a thousand deaths for them in particular, could accomplish no more by way of atonement than was done for all by that public transaction. How, then, could he limit the expiation to a part? If it had been gold or a pearl that had made the satisfaction, it might by a secret understanding have been offered and accepted for a few. But how by any secret covenant could one die in the room of a given number, when his death, as publicly explained, actually cleared out of the way of all, every impediment to pardon but unbelief; and that was a difficulty not to be removed by his dying in their stead, but by the meritorious influence of his obedience? What chance was there for any private transaction in things properly belonging to the atonement? What room was left for any thing to be done in secret analogous to the private offering of the pearl for one in ten? Who was there to witness such a covert and deceptive transaction? Who has been in the cabinet and brought back the report? Who knows that the satisfaction, after all these public appearances, was not offered and accepted in good faith for the whole?

Suppose for a moment that it was as we have represented; that the Redeemer by his sin-offering cleared every difficulty out of the way of

the pardon of all but unbelief, and then by the merit of his obedience secured the gift of faith to the elect: and what more could he have done for his chosen by any thing public or private? What need, then, of searching for a private transaction appertaining to the atonement itself?

Having thus found that the atonement was that public measure which was brought forward before the world by the Moral Governor (or by God as he stood related to moral agents), and that no part of it lay in the secret department of the sovereign efficient cause (or God as he stood related to mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions); we may now resume the train of thought which was suspended at the close of the last chapter, and see why, as analogous to all his other operations, and why, as growing out of truth itself, the Moral Governor, in providing and producing the atonement, should proceed just as though men were independent agents, and without the least apparent reference to election or regeneration.

I have seen a concession from an amiable and distinguished writer on the other side, which, if steadily kept in view, will set all right at last. In showing that the non-elect perish by their own fault notwithstanding that there is no atonement for them, he says, "We must in all cases be careful not to confound the secret purposes of God with the rule of our duty. . . Between these two things there is often no coincidence." Now after "the rule of our duty," only add, nor with any other measure of moral government, and every thing is settled; for then we shall not confound any thing relating to election with the atonement. And why should not this be added? Is it not as wrong to confound God's secret purposes respecting the passive with any of the measures adapted to agents, as with that particular one which we call law? and wrong for the same reason, because the two are distinct? "We must," therefore, "be careful not to confound the secret purposes of God with the" atonement. "Between these two things there is often no coincidence."

This care we profess to exercise. We do as we understand from the Scriptures that God himself does. When we speak of a measure properly intended for moral agents, we know nothing about men as destined to be the subjects or not the subjects of passive regeneration. When we speak of the designs and acts of the Moral Governor, we know nothing about the sovereign efficient cause, but speak of God as he appears in the public order of a moral government, and scruple not, because the Scriptures do not scruple, to ascribe to him all the aims which the measures of that government are calculated to accomplish. When we place ourselves in a moral government, we cannot see the other department, but speak of the glorious Being at the head of this as though he sustained no other character. In short, we express ourselves

in the pure dialect of a moral government. And when we turn to the atonement, we know nothing about men as elect and non-elect, but as capable agents, or if we look to their moral character, as believers and unbelievers. And then an atonement which was offered, that "whosoever believeth" might "not perish," which placed, and was designed to place, remission so within the reach of all that they may enjoy it if they will do their duty, and are solemnly bound to make it their own, and cannot lose it without enormous guilt, we unhesitatingly pronounce an atonement for all.

CHAPTER VII.

ATTRIBUTES OF MORAL AGENTS.

BUT of what avail to the non-elect for God to open the way for them to be pardoned upon their believing, when he had determined never to impart to them the gift of faith? It was no atonement for them after all. This is the greatest difficulty that rises up in the mind. I must, however, remark, that in this question you speak of the same man in two distinct characters, as distinct as two different persons, and might as well ask, of what avail a privilege to Peter since Judas was never to be sanctified? When you speak of an atonement for a man, you speak of a privilege for a moral agent; but when you speak of his being regenerated, you change the scene in a moment, and refer to him only as passive, in which character, privileges have no relation to him.

This objection goes further; it really overlooks all that in human agents which renders them the proper subjects of moral government, and on which the whole structure of a moral government is founded. Is there in a moral agent without the Spirit, bottom enough to support such a privilege, so as to render the provision worthy of any account? If not, there is not bottom enough to support any other of the measures of a moral government, such as law, punishment, and the like.

The root of the difficulty lies in overlooking the capacity of unsanctified men. And without capacity they are no longer agents; and when they cease to be agents, they indeed cease to be susceptible of the privilege of an atonement. If the non-elect are as powerless in regard to faith as dead masses of matter, I admit that the atonement was not made for them in any sense; and then I must consider the appearances of such a provision as calculated to deceive. But if they possess the full capacity which is the proper ground of treating them as moral agents, then there is an atonement for them as agents none the less for their

being unsanctified. If a feast is brought into a room surrounded with statues, and it is determined to impart life only to half; there may be a ludicrous proclamation that it is for as many as will receive it, but after all it would be preposterous to say that it was provided for all. But if it is brought into a room surrounded with living men, and they are all to share it if they will, and are invited and urged to partake, then it may truly be said to be provided for all, though in the event a part refuse the invitation. The question, then, about power is really a vital one.

On this and some other accounts it becomes necessary to analyze a moral agent and to see exactly what he is, what attributes he possesses, what relations he sustains, and what effects an atonement made for moral agents ought to have on him.

It is important in the outset to gain precise ideas of a moral agent, and to carry the definition in our minds through the whole discussion. A moral agent, then, is a being capable of deserving praise and blame. But as there are no works of supererogation, and no moral goodness among creatures but what lies in conformity to the will of God, nothing is entitled to praise from him but the fulfilment of an obligation, or to blame from him but the violation of an obligation. A moral agent, then (to carry back the idea one step further), is a creature capable of fulfilling or violating obligations. But as he cannot fulfil or violate an obligation of which he is not susceptible, the radical definition of a moral agent is, a creature susceptible of obligations. And as the bonds are actually imposed by divine authority on all who are capable of receiving them, the definition which accords with matter of fact is, a creature under obligations. When therefore we inquire what constitutes or is the basis of moral agency, we are only asking what that is in the creature which is the foundation of obligation.

That foundation is no other than the faculties of a rational soul, to which, in reference to the present subject at least, I am willing to add light. What is it which makes a man rather than a brute bound to love and serve God? His relations to God? But a brute has the relation of a creature, and a creature preserved and fed. A divine command? The question then returns, why is a man more fit to receive a divine command than a brute? There must be a basis to support the obligation, distinct from the authority which imposes it, as a platform is distinct from the hand which lays a substance upon it. The command only imposes it from above, but does not support it from beneath. That thing in the creature which can sustain the obligation more than if the command was laid upon the air, or a block, or a brute, is the secret after which I am inquiring. What is that thing? You say it is a rational soul. Then the intellectual faculties are the basis of the obligation. The true doc-

trine on this subject is, that, wherever a rational soul is found, there are talents which God has a right to command.

This basis is not at all affected by the state of the temper. With the same capacity and light, a bad man is as much bound to love and serve God as a good man. A depraved disposition does not destroy or weaken the basis, nor does a holy heart go in to constitute or complete it. If it did, a holy disposition would be that in the creature on which rests the obligation to be holy; and where the disposition is wanting there could be no obligation, and of course no sin. And until a thing can be the foundation of itself, there could be no holiness, because there could be no obligation to be holy. The disposition itself would not be holy, for it would not be the fulfilment of a previous obligation, but the basis of one to follow. The previous obligation could not exist without holiness; but the previous obligation must exist and be fulfilled before holiness can exist. A holy disposition, therefore, would be impossible; and then an obligation to holiness could not exist; and then there could be no violation of an obligation, in other words, no sin. Try the principle in another light. If disinclination to duty destroys obligation, there is no stable landmark between right and wrong, but a movable spectre, which recedes before inclination; and so long as a man follows his inclination (which he is sure to do as long as he is free), he cannot sin. And as it is not sin to be forced against one's inclination, the possibility of sinning is excluded: God could not create a being capable of sinning; and then every law, human or divine, which attempts to control the inclination, or to impose an obligation in opposition to it, is tyrannical, and punishment in every form is oppression: no distinction remains between moral good and evil; every feeling of disapprobation or resentment against another is founded in a delusion; and instead of a kingdom of moral agents, the Governor of the world is left alone amidst the lumber of innumerable automata. To all this length you must go, or return back to the plain principle of common sense, that a rational soul, whatever its temper may be, is bound to submit to the government of God.

There is no need, therefore, of recurring to our original purity in Adam to find the foundation of obligation. Under the notion that sinners have no more power to believe than stocks, men have attempted to justify the universal command on the ground that the power was lost by our own fault. If a servant, say they, has cut off his hands to avoid labor, his master may still require his daily task, and punish him for the neglect. But if a solid ground of obligation independent of Adam still remains in the soul, there is no need of resorting to this laboring principle to vindicate the command. We lost nothing in Adam (so far as concerns the present subject), but a right temper; and the want of that does not

impair the basis of obligation which exists in ourselves. What else can you imagine we lost? Power? But what power distinct from a good heart? Have we not still power to love God if our heart is well disposed? Do you mean a power to make the heart good, or a self-determining power of the will? But did Adam himself possess that? What had he which we have not but a right temper? And that could not have been the ground of obligation had it continued. Besides, this resort to original holiness for the ground of obligation involves so many seeming absurdities, that it ought not to be made without the most urgent necessity. Take the case of the servant. His sin was one, the act of disabling himself. For this he might be punished as long and as much as that single act deserved. But to impute sin to him for not performing his task after it had become impossible, is contrary to all truth and justice. He was not to blame for that omission. With the best dispositions he could not have prevented it. If God looks at the heart, and accepts "a willing mind" where there is nothing else to give, he could not have seen that servant striving with the best desires to perform his task without hands, and blamed him for the failure. The sin was but one. And if this illustrates the case of Adam's posterity, there is but one sin to be charged against them all, and that was committed in Eden. The idea of different degrees of criminality is a dream; and men would have been as guilty, and might have received the same punishment, had they been born without reason. No personal act of theirs is sin, and it is no matter what they do. These consequences must follow, or there must be in the present structure of the soul a foundation of obligation altogether independent of Adam's innocence or fall. And where do the Scriptures teach us that men have not in themselves a complete foundation of obligation without resorting to Adam? What text from Genesis to Revelation hints at such a thing? The notion is altogether a human inference. So far from supporting such a thought, the Scriptures pointedly charge sinners with faculties which render them without excuse, alleging that they have eyes but see not, ears but hear not, hearts but do not understand, talents but will not employ them, a price in their hands with no heart to improve it; and constantly treat them as moral agents in their own persons, and as fully so as if there had been no federal head.

This independent basis of obligation is what we mean, and all that we mean, by natural ability. We certainly do not mean by this phrase a power to originate the disposition, or a self-determining power of the will, but merely a power to love and serve God *if* the heart is well disposed. This power lies in the physical faculties of a rational soul, connected with light. Without the faculties a man could not love God even were it pos-

sible for him to have a good heart; but with the faculties and sufficient light he could. The faculties with the light, therefore, constitute exactly a power to love and serve God *if* the heart is well disposed. And when we ascribe this power to sinners, we only assert that they have the physical faculties of a rational soul; and our single object is to make out a complete basis of obligation. It is so self-evident that a man cannot be bound to perform natural impossibilities, or to do what with the best dispositions he has no power to accomplish (as for instance to make a world), that we find it necessary to prove the existence of such a power, in order to fasten upon the conscience a sense of obligation. But call it by whatever name you please, the whole that we mean is, that the physical faculties, accompanied with light, are a complete and *bonâ fide* basis of obligation, independent of the temper of the heart, or the action of the Spirit, or original righteousness or sin, and none the less for man's dependence. This is all that any Calvinist ever meant, or can mean, by natural ability.*

About the existence of the thing, therefore, which we call natural ability, there can be no dispute. None can doubt that the worst of men are rational beings, or that their natural faculties constitute a power to love and serve God, if their hearts are well disposed. And few will doubt that it is on this account that they are capable of receiving obligations from a divine command. If any controversy remains it must be about the name: and the question will be, whether a *power* to love and serve God if the heart is well disposed, can properly be denominated an ability. For as to the term natural, long and venerated custom, as well as the necessity of having a word of such an import, has fastened to it a meaning opposite to moral. And if the thing in question is properly called an ability, it certainly is not a moral one (is not deserving of praise or blame), and therefore must be distinguished by the opposite epithet. In vindication of the term ability I submit the following remarks:—

(1) When the word is thus applied it expresses what is generally meant by power. When in the common affairs of life we say that a man has power to do a thing, we seldom refer to his willingness, and never to an ability to originate his disposition, but to a capacity to do the thing if he is so inclined. When we excuse him for not making or succeeding in an attempt, on the ground that he was not able, we never allude to his disinclination, nor to his incapacity to control his disposition, but to the want of natural strength even with the best desires. And when we affirm

* Even those Calvinists who deny the existence of disposition, and place every thing in exercise, and of course see no sense in the appended clause, "if the heart is well disposed," mean nothing more by ability than the physical powers, and have no other end in asserting it than to make out a proper basis of obligation.

that he is not bound to perform impossibilities, we always mean that he is not obliged to do more than he can with a well-disposed heart.

(2) As the natural faculties constitute that capacity in which the obligation to serve God is founded, they bear the same relation to the obligation that the muscular strength of a slave does to the obligation to lift a weight when bidden by his master. Without the strength no command could fasten the obligation upon him; with the strength he is reasonably bound. In like manner without the faculties no command could lay the obligation upon us; with the faculties the bond is reasonably imposed. That muscular strength of the slave you call power, because it constitutes an ability to lift the weight if he is so inclined, and because it forms the proper ground of obligation; and why not for the same reasons call the physical faculties in question by the same name?

(3) As the denial of every species of power presents the monstrous idea of a command to do impossibilities, it conveys a false and injurious idea of God, and serves to relieve the conscience of a sense of blame. On the other hand, when the alleged ability is qualified and limited by the term natural, and is so explained as to exclude a self-determining power, the phrase has no tendency to hide our dependence, while it has all the advantage of justifying God and fastening upon the conscience a sense of obligation and guilt.

(4) No impediment lies in the way of a sinner's loving God but a depraved temper, for which he is wholly to blame. If you are disposed to call this depraved temper an inability, there is no inability in the way but a blamable one. Now only admit that an inability which is blamable is properly called moral, and that the opposite of moral is natural (barely these two things), and there is no avoiding the phrase in question. If there is no inability but what is blamable or moral, there is none which is blameless or natural. And if there is no natural inability, there must be natural power.

Thus it appears that there exist in men physical faculties which constitute a natural ability to serve God, and which, independently of their present temper, or their original righteousness, or any divine influence, and none the less for their dependence, form the proper basis of obligation. This principle, on which is bottomed the whole structure of a moral government, is confirmed by all its measures and decisions.

Having thus laid open the foundation of moral agency, I will now proceed to exhibit the attributes of moral agents in their order. To moral agents belong,

(1) Capacity. What they are capable of doing if well disposed, they may be said to have a capacity for doing, or a natural ability to perform. In particular, all who hear the gospel possess that kind of power to be-

lieve, which is the foundation of obligation. This capacity or basis of obligation is altogether separate from every thing belonging to the passive character of men, and must be contemplated without reference to the action of the Spirit, or to any decree respecting that action.

(2) Instruction. This is necessary to agents on two accounts. First, because knowledge, as needful to guide the understanding, is intimately associated with the capacity. Secondly, to furnish motives to influence the heart and will. This introduces an important circumstance in relation to agents, viz. that in all instances they are governed by motives. Take away the connection between motives and volition, and mind would be extinct. Not merely rational action, but all action of mind, would cease. The maniac is still governed by motives, though distorted by a distempered fancy; and even that semblance of mind which exists in a brute is governed by motives.

In both of these points of view instruction is addressed to men only as agents. Only as agents can knowledge guide them, only as agents can motives prompt them. Upon this principle it is that instructions are poured upon them without apparent reference to their passive character, or to any action or decree of God concerning it.

(3) Law. This is necessary for agents both to impose obligations and to present motives. The commands, promises, and threatenings which go in to constitute law, are addressed to men only as agents. The passive have nothing to do with these things.

(4) Obligation. This rests upon capacity or natural ability, in other words, upon the physical faculties accompanied with light. It is not diminished by the dependence of man, nor by a bad temper, nor by the absence of the Spirit; nor is it increased by original holiness, nor by a good temper, nor by the influence of the Spirit, further than the latter presents light to the understanding, or is a mercy to be acknowledged. In contemplating men, therefore, as creatures under obligations, we have nothing to do with their dependence, or their temper, or the action of the Spirit (further than is above expressed), or with any decree concerning that action.

(5) Moral character, good or bad. This is formed by the fulfilment or violation of obligations, by an agency as distinctly their own, and as entire as though they were independent. As moral character is calculated from their obligations, it is as independent of every thing passive as the obligations themselves.

(6) Deserts, — merit or demerit, a title to reward or a liability to punishment. These all result from their character, as grounded on their obligations and conduct, and are as independent of every thing passive as

the character and obligations themselves. None but agents bear any relation to these things.

(7) Condemnation. This is founded on their deserts, and is equally independent of every thing passive. None but agents bear any relation to condemnation.

(8) Pardon and justification. These are merely the changing of the relations of agents, the freeing of them from punishment, and the entitling of them to reward. These acts respect only agents; the passive have nothing to do with them.

(9) Provision for pardon and justification. This, of course, was made for agents alone, and therefore without visible reference to men as merely passive, or to the regenerating influence of the Spirit, or to any decree concerning that influence. As it was made for agents, for beings who were to act towards it, and on whose action as a *sine qua non* the effect was to depend, its avowed end must have been to open the way for their pardon and justification if they would believe.

(10) Subjection to a final examination of character. Men will appear before the tribunal only as agents; not as those who have received or failed to receive divine impressions, but as those who have acted right or wrong.

(11) Rewards and punishments. These will be administered to men in the same character in which they appear before the tribunal.

ANOTHER SERIES.

(1) Possibility of action. This grows out of their capacity, which without this would be no capacity. What is a capacity for action where the action is a natural impossibility? As the capacity from which the possibility of action is calculated, is not affected by the presence or absence of the Spirit, nor by any decree concerning his influence, nor yet by the certainty that the capacity will not be employed, they who speak and act in reference to agents have a right, without regard to any of these things, to assume that their action is possible, and to speak and act as though it was likely to happen. Even the omniscient God, as we shall see in another place, shapes his measures as though their action was probable, even when he foresees that it will never occur. On the same principle we have a right, whenever an argument requires it, to make the supposition of the return of the very devils to holiness. As agents they have a capacity to return; and all the language of the universe respecting the possibility of action refers of course to agents.

It has been said, that for the non-elect to accept the atonement is nat-

urally impossible, because it was determined not to dispose them to accept. Now this is wholly confounding the two characters of men, and burying their capacity and agency under their dependence. They have as agents no capacity to act, because as passive they are not acted upon ! What more could you say if they were blocks ? The issue, I know, will be the same as though the capacity did not exist, but still the capacity makes all the difference between the government of God and fate. If you choose to say that it is morally impossible for them to "come" on account of their wicked hearts, to this, though it applies to them as agents, we do not object.

(2) Susceptibility of offers, invitations, and expostulations. These are all addressed to agents alone, without respect to any thing but their capacity. They constantly allude to the possibility of their action and to their obligations, and are founded on the assumption that these do indeed exist.

(3) Probation or trial. This is only an opportunity afforded agents to act out their character, and show to the universe what they will do in the circumstances in which they are placed, irrespectively of any influence to be exerted on the same creatures as passive. I add to the definition, that it is an opportunity to act in reference to a reward or punishment proposed. The placing of a creature on probation is the treating of him as an agent, without respect to his purely passive character, and therefore without reference to any aids of the Spirit except by way of reward. The difficulty which has been found in defining a state of probation, disappears when the subject is viewed in this light ; and the objections which have been raised against the term may perhaps be abandoned. These have arisen from overlooking the character of men as agents, and the fact that probation is for them only as such, and from filling the eye with absolute decrees and promises which relate to them as purely passive, or passive in reference to the promised influence, and from making too much account of foreknowledge. Probation is a term found only in the dialect of a moral government, and is with entire consistency excluded by those who speak only in the language of the other department. But if it is proper and according to truth for God to treat men as agents even under the economy of grace, it is proper for him still to put them on probation. When the term is thus explained, what objection to its use ? Is election brought against it ? But God treats agents, as we have seen, just as though there was no election. Is foreknowledge brought against it ? But God treats agents, it will appear hereafter, just as though there was no foreknowledge. Are the absolute promises of the covenant brought against it ? These are made to men as the reward of agents, but are fulfilled upon them as passive receivers. Now it will

appear hereafter, that while to men, as passive receivers of stipulated impressions, the promises of God are absolute, to the same men as mere agents, his treatment is still conditional. While in the former character men have full evidence that they shall never be left to apostasy, in the character of mere agents, whose persevering holiness is both a duty and essential to salvation, their final acceptance is still suspended on their enduring to the end. Probation, therefore, as the treatment of mere agents irrespective of divine influence to incline them to act, may exist after the full assurance of hope, and for the same reasons, after abandonment to judicial blindness. What objection, then, to the word? It imports nothing uncertain in the divine mind, nothing unstable in the covenant of redemption or of grace, but merely the treatment of men as rational and accountable beings. It imports, in short, exactly what is set forth in the parables of the talents and the pounds (Matt. 25: 14-30. Luke 19: 12-26), and in many other parts of Scripture.*

To agents also belong all individual experiments upon the moral character. None but agents have a moral character to develop. Such experiments are made, of course, without reference to any thing passive in men, and just as though they were independent.

(4) Opportunity or a fair chance to obtain good. A fair chance actively to obtain, is where a blessing is so placed within the reach of an agent that he may enjoy it by doing his duty. The expression always alludes to his capacity and the possibility of his action. Opportunity is predicable only of agents, as it would be preposterous to say that a man has an opportunity to receive a divine impression which is to be made without respect to any thing he has ever done or will do. The term always refers to some action which may follow; and the thing, limited as it is to agents, is entire without the Spirit or any decree concerning his influence.†

* "I know," says Dr. Watts, "it has been the opinion of some persons that this life is not properly called a state of probation, or trial of men for eternity; because the final event is not uncertain, since it is known to God already, and partly determined by him. And yet these very persons will say that a season of affliction or temptation is a season of trial to the people of God; for it is so called in Scripture, 2 Cor. 8: 2. Heb. 11: 36. 1 Pet. 4: 12. 1 Pet. 1: 7, it is called the trial of our faith, &c. Now I would fain know whether the event of every season of trial, of every kind of men,—be not known to God. And in this sense it is not uncertain. And yet Scripture with much propriety calls one a season of trial; and I see no reason to exclude the other from the same name; especially since the sacred writers use it for wicked men also, Rev. 3: 10, 'I will keep thee from the hour of temptation,' or trial, 'which shall come upon all the world, to try them which dwell upon the earth.'" — *Watts' Works*, Vol. VI. p. 285, note.

† Chance, like possibility, is not equally confined to the active sense. Thus we say that a man stands a chance to draw a prize, or to be regenerated. But opportunity excludes the passive sense altogether.

(5) Privileges. The radical definition of a privilege is, a means of happiness which a man has a capacity (or is able if well disposed) to improve for his good. It is always reckoned originally from his natural ability. But in a moral government a shorter course is taken, and it is reckoned immediately from his obligations, which are founded on his ability. Whatever he ought to improve, is accounted a price put into his hands. The definition of a privilege, then, in a moral government is this, a means of holiness or happiness which one is under obligations to improve for his good. The word never denotes a final blessing, but a means which will lead to a final blessing if rightly improved.

Privileges are predicable only of agents. We do not speak of the privilege of being acted upon, the privilege of being the passive subject of impressions. It may be a favor to be impressed. It is a mercy to be elected and regenerated, but not a privilege, except so far as it is capable of being improved by an agent. It is indeed a privilege to be permitted to pray for the Spirit, but this is the privilege of an agent. It is a privilege that the mission of the Spirit has been procured for men, for it is a blessing which they may improve by faith and prayer for their good. But nothing is a privilege but what belongs to an agent.

A privilege, then, is complete without any influence of the Spirit inclining the man to improve it. It is complete, provided his obligation to improve it is complete. If he possesses that ability to use a blessing for his good which is the *bonâ fide* basis of obligation, it may be charged against him as a privilege with as much reason as though the enjoyment of it depended on his stretching out the hand. A benefit so placed within his reach that he ought to make it his own, is his own. It is a blessing in his hands till he throws it away; and the traces of it will still be found upon him as an accountable being. Otherwise the abuse of privileges is a phrase altogether without a meaning, and is no more applicable to men than to statues. It is only because it is difficult to realize the completeness of the obligations of the non-elect to believe, that we doubt whether the atonement is a complete privilege to them. We pore so much on their inability, and lay the ground of their obligation so much in Eden, that it becomes difficult to realize that they are under the same present, personal obligations to believe that they are to do any outward act. If remission was offered them on the simple condition of their stretching out the hand, it would be easy to see that the privilege was complete, because it would be obvious that their obligation was perfect. Only let it be realized that without reference to Adam they are under as entire obligations to believe as they would be to extend an arm at the divine command, and every difficulty vanishes.

Or, to take the subject in another view, what more could be done for mere agents? If a foundation is laid in the atonement for them to be pardoned if they will believe, and the offer is made to them, accompanied with those instructions and commands which lay them under complete obligations to obtain remission, and which leave them no excuse for perishing, what more could be done for mere agents? If more is done it must be by regenerating influence on the passive; but no power could make that any part of a privilege. When God has made those arrangements which complete the obligation of men to be saved, he can lift his hand to heaven, and without a figure, but merely in the character in which he stands related to agents, truly and literally say, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?"

And yet it is asked, what possible privilege could the atonement be to men dead in trespasses and sins, and on whom God was determined not to exert a lifegiving power? What could the atonement prove to them but an aggravation of their torment? And these questions have been urged with as much confidence as it would have been asked, what privilege can light be to a man born blind? This mighty difficulty, which struggles in so many minds, has arisen from overlooking the capacity of sinners, and from placing them before the eye as mere passive recipients, in an affair which concerns them only as moral agents. And when moral agents are put out of view, and men are regarded merely as passive subjects of absolute, immutable, efficient decrees, why then indeed you cannot find upon the non-elect any privilege, or any chance or possibility of obtaining life. These things were never affirmed of men, except by a confusion of terms, in any other character than that of moral agents. But to deny that a means of happiness which men are bound to use for their good is a privilege, unless they are acted upon by the Spirit, is to change the whole language of the Bible for a dialect befitting a course of action upon passive machines. It is to break up all the language of the world. And it is manifestly untrue; for the worst of men are still moral agents, and under reasonable obligations to live by the atonement; and the language of the Bible on this subject expresses realities, or guilt is a name, and punishment oppression. It is so, or the capacity of creatures, separate from the action of the Spirit, is no adequate basis to support any of the measures of a moral government. Why, then, issue laws where men are not to be constrained to obey? or invitations and promises where a sovereign power is not to give them effect? In short, upon this principle, the measures of a moral government, separated from the action of the Spirit, are as unsuitable for men as for stocks.

But to put the fact that the atonement is a privilege to the wicked

beyond all doubt, I can bring the whole weight of the divine integrity to support it. That God does account to men as privileges whatever they ought to improve for their happiness, and holds them as responsible for abused privileges as for a violated law, we have already seen. And now to come to the very thing itself, the atonement, yes, the atonement, as being exactly what it is, an expiation for sin, is charged against the wicked as a privilege; and the charge will be acted upon in proceedings most demanding the precision of justice and truth. It is not true merely in the shape of a nice and studied phraseology, but is a ponderous reality, which will be recognized in the most solemn transactions of the universe. The just God, as I shall show hereafter by a large and luminous array of texts, not only pronounces with all his veracity that the wicked possess the privilege, but will judge them at the last day for throwing it out of their hands, and will found on that fact, stable enough to support the infinite weight, the retribution of eternal fire. Could God himself give testimony more decided than this? If, then, the moral government of God is not a delusive show, and considering the undeniable sensibilities of creatures, a system of palpable oppression, it never ought to have been doubted that the atonement is a privilege even to those who reject it.

But how can it be a privilege to them if it did not render their pardon possible, even on the supposition of their faith? The pearl, it is said, would have been paid for the nine hundred prisoners had it been foreseen that they would accept the offered release; but it was not paid for them, and a natural impossibility lies in the way of their coming out. According to this representation the atonement is not a privilege to those who perish, but only would have been had it been foreseen that they would believe. It ought not, then, to have been charged against them as such.

These are all the attributes which it seems necessary to name. But before the chapter closes I will make a few general remarks.

All the attributes which have been mentioned are inseparably united in every moral agent, and can no more be divided than the essential properties of matter. For instance, there is no such thing as being a sinner, and needing an atonement, without a capacity to accept it. For without a capacity to believe there would not be a capacity to obey; and without a capacity to obey there would not be a capacity to sin. You must not split up and divide the essential attributes of a moral agent. You must not contemplate him as a sinner, without contemplating him as capable of faith. To say that he needs an atonement, and yet labors under a natural incapacity to believe, is the same sundering of essential properties, and the same contradiction, as to say that a mass of matter has shape but not impenetrability, or that a ball is not round. Further,

if a man has a capacity to believe, then his faith is naturally possible, then he is susceptible of a fair offer of life, of a fair opportunity or chance to obtain it, of the complete privilege of an atonement, and of a course of probation or trial. Such a possibility of action and susceptibility of privileges are inseparable from capacity, are inseparable of course from a sinner. A man cannot be one to whom an atonement is adapted, that is, a sinner, but in the character in which he is capable and susceptible of all these things. And to call him a sinner, and yet deny the natural possibility of his believing, or his fair chance to live by the atonement, or the completeness of his privilege (allowing the gospel to be in his hands), is the same contradiction as is noticed above. Further, if the atonement was made for sinning agents, it was made for them as creatures who were to act towards it, who were to accept or reject it; otherwise the essential attributes of agents are divided. Now if the enjoyment of it depends on their accepting it, in other words, if they cannot enjoy it without accepting it, then it was made with a distinct understanding that it was not to be enjoyed by them without their fulfilling that condition. In this sense the provision was made for them conditionally. It must have been so made if made for sinning agents, or the essential attributes of agents are divided. No matter what influence on the same creatures as passive was to secure their faith; yet the provision for agents, which could not be enjoyed without their act in believing, was certainly conditional as to its application. Further, if the atonement so far affects any agent that he is susceptible of the offer of its benefits, it must affect all his other relations which are capable of being affected by such a measure; it must give him a fair opportunity or chance to live by it, must put him completely upon probation, and be to him a perfect privilege; otherwise the essential attributes of an agent are divided. If the atonement so affected the relations of Simon Magus that he could receive the offer of pardon by it, then it gave him a fair chance for pardon, put him fully upon probation, and was to him the complete privilege of an atonement.

Keeping in mind that the atonement was made for none but moral agents, we can now see what kind of effects we must look for on men in deciding for how many it was made. We must search only for those effects which would result to agents, and not for any which belong to mere receivers of sanctifying impressions. These two characters of man are as distinct as body and soul. Now, in examining whether a provision for the soul is complete, you have not to ask whether it involves a provision for the body. For the same reason, in deciding whether the atonement was a complete provision for Simon Magus as a moral agent, you have nothing to do with the question whether it stood connected with a design to regenerate him. If you find on him the offer of pardon by it,

and a capacity to accept the offer if well disposed, or a natural possibility of believing, then you find on him a fair chance to live by it, and the complete privilege of an atonement, and find him fully placed by it in a state of probation. And then you find upon him all the effects which could result from the atonement to a mere moral agent. And then you may pronounce, unhesitatingly, that it was fully made for him as such.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MORAL GOVERNMENT.

BEFORE I proceed to other principles observed in the treatment of agents, I will stop here and exhibit the outlines of a moral government. As this is nothing more than the treatment of moral agents, and a treatment according to truth, or according to the powers and attributes which they possess, the discussion will form a counterpart to the last chapter, and will go to confirm the principles there laid down. On this account I introduce it here. I have other reasons for presenting the subject. Were the mind familiarized to the principles and operations of a moral government, it could more easily contemplate men in the distinct character of moral agents, and see some meaning in a provision for them as such. It seems to have been thought that such a provision, when separated from regenerating power, is worthy of no account; in other words, that a mere measure of moral government is of no importance to men when separated from the acts of the sovereign efficient cause. This would be true if men were stocks, but cannot be true if there is in them a foundation for treating them as rational and accountable beings. That treatment by itself forms an immensely important part of the divine administration; and it may serve to correct the mistake to see how much of the glory of God, even under the dispensation of grace, this department really comprehends.

In a limited sense a moral government is the mere administration of law; but in a more general and perfect sense it includes the whole treatment which God renders to moral agents. This treatment certainly constitutes a distinct and very important department of divine operations, and ought as a whole to be covered by a general name. And what name more proper than moral government, especially as the thing accords with the variety of particulars comprehended under the name of government in human affairs? The government of Great Britain consists not merely

in making and executing laws, but in all those operations in which the rulers as such come into contact with the subjects as such. If they establish churches for public worship, and Sunday schools for instruction, and saving banks as a motive to diligence and economy, and hospitals as a merciful provision; if they make experiments upon the temper of their subjects, or enter into contract with individuals; if they grant audiences, and receive petitions, and pardon criminals, and grant pensions and privileges; these are all the operations of the government of Great Britain. In like manner I comprehend in a moral government, not only the dispensation of law, but all the institutions of religion, all the instructions furnished, all the motives presented, all provisions made for moral agents, all experiments upon the human character, all covenants entered into, all audiences granted, all answers to prayer, all acts of pardon and justification, all privileges afforded, and whatever else belongs to creatures as capable of action and choice, as governable by motives, as susceptible of instruction and obligations, of praise and blame, of opportunities and privileges, or, in a word, as subjects of moral discipline.

The whole fabric rests upon the principle that all this treatment is suited to rational creatures even without the Spirit, in other words, that they are complete moral agents without supernatural influence. The Moral Governor grounds his claims, not on their temper, nor on their original righteousness, nor on any spiritual aids afforded, but on their physical faculties accompanied with light, or their natural ability. By comparing their obligations with their conduct, and without reference to any thing else, he judges of their character and deserts. From their obligations he estimates their privileges, reckoning to them as such whatever they ought to improve for their good. Where a blessing is so placed within their reach that they can enjoy it by doing their duty, he charges against them an opportunity or fair chance to obtain it. He makes experiments upon their temper just as though they were independent. In all his measures he assumes from their capacity that their holy action is possible. He presents instructions and motives fitted to influence rational beings as though he expected the effect from their own independent powers. He commands, invites, rewards, and punishes, as though there was no Spirit. With the exceptions mentioned in a former chapter, he never once alludes to the passive character of men throughout the whole administration of a moral government, but holds his way through the world with an eye apparently filled with agents alone. He sets before him a race of distinct and complete agents, and proceeds like an earthly prince who has no control over the minds of his subjects but by motives. This must be apparent to any one who opens his Bible, and has already been proved by quotations sufficiently numerous. In

short, a moral government is a world by itself, because moral agents, so to speak, are complete entities in themselves.

These principles of a moral government, which are everywhere conspicuous on the sacred page, are what Arminians have discovered, and set themselves to defend, in opposition to doctrines which they thought irreconcilable with these. As advocates for the fundamental laws of a moral government, they deserve real praise ; but their error has lain in not perceiving that all the attributes of moral agency are perfectly consistent with absolute dependence. If ever this unhappy division in the church is healed, it must be on the ground here taken, by showing that respectable class of men that all the prerogatives of a moral government can be maintained in perfect consistency with absolute election and special grace.

Considered in relation to its dominion over the mind, a moral government may be called a government of motives ; for these are the instruments by which it works. It is a course of acting, not upon the disposition by insensible influence, but upon the reason and conscience of a rational being by manifest motives. The only exception is where sanctifying power is exerted by way of reward, or out of gracious respect to something which an agent has done. But all sovereign influences of the sanctifying Spirit, as well as all decrees concerning them, belong to the other department.*

* In other respects, sovereignty is not excluded from a moral government. It is largely exercised in the rewards and punishments of the present life, in respect of time, manner, and degree. It is exercised in the changes of dispensations, in the enactment of positive statutes, in the different degrees of light afforded to different nations and ages, in the enlightening influences of the Spirit on the unregenerate (which are as really a part of the treatment of agents as any other instruction), and in many other respects. The atonement itself was sovereignly appointed. Nothing limits sovereignty but law and covenant. If any thing more is included in a moral government than what is according to law or covenant, it must be sovereignly directed.

The whole process of sanctification after the regenerating act seems to fall within this department : for though the same sovereignty attends it as to time, manner, and degree, that marks the other rewards of the present life, it is still of the nature of a reward, and was in general promised as such to the first act of faith. If, however, any part of it can be considered so purely sovereign as not to fall under the character of a reward, that part, I own, must be excluded from a moral government ; for nothing entitles a motion of the Spirit to be brought into this department but its being either a reward or a mere act of illumination.

I have not dared with certainty to place any thing in the other department but election and regeneration. The formation of the natural disposition belongs to the Creator : the changes made in it by natural causes, except so far as they are a reward or punishment, seem to stand among the operations of the Preserver. If the convicting influences of the Spirit barely convey light to the mind, they are ascribable to the

Besides the purely sovereign impressions on the mind (not meaning, however, those which barely illumine, nor those which are made by motives), I know of nothing done in time among all the works and ways of God which ought to be excluded from a moral government, but the mere operations of the Creator and Preserver; nor these so far as they are a reward or punishment to any, or are primarily intended to instruct or furnish motives.*

Moral Governor; for light is only for agents. The impressions, otherwise than sanctifying, which are made to incline men to particular actions, appear to be produced by motives addressed to an existing temper, and so far belong to the Moral Governor. If, besides all these, there are direct impressions, purely sovereign, before or after regeneration, sanctifying or otherwise, they must be placed in the department of the sovereign efficient cause.

* Creatures must exist before they can be governed, and they must be sustained in existence, in order to continue subjects of moral discipline. Their mere creation and support, therefore, do not belong to a moral government, except so far as these are a reward or punishment to some. The creation of Isaac and Samuel, though to themselves no part of a moral government, was a gracious recompense to their parents. Men may be sustained in life as a reward or punishment to themselves (Exod. 20 : 12. Rom. 9 : 22), or as a punishment or reward to others, or in answer to their prayers (Judg. 2 : 3. Matt. 9 : 18, 25); and they may be cut off as a punishment to themselves or others (2 Sam. 12 : 14. Ps. 55 : 23).

How far the whole visible universe and the operations of nature around us, viewed in relation to creatures already existing, stand connected with a moral government, is a more difficult question. So far as any of these things are a reward or punishment, or are primarily intended to instruct or furnish motives, they belong to this department. Thus fruitful seasons are either a reward (Deut. 28 : 12), or a source of instruction and motives (Acts 14 : 17). Thus the briars and thorns are a punishment (Gen. 3 : 18), and the tokens of God in heaven and earth are a warning (Ps. 65 : 8). But how far do the works of nature belong to a moral government as mere sources of instruction and motives? We must not include every thing in this department which was intended to instruct or move creatures to action, for then we must exclude nothing. All that God has ever done was intended to enlighten creatures and to subserve a government by motives. But instructions and motives subservient to the government of a family may be drawn from facts which constitute no part of family government. If a measure has no other end than to instruct or move, like some things contained in the Bible; or in case it has another end, if that end applies exclusively to agents (like the divine law, which, while it teaches and offers inducements, imposes obligations); then it properly belongs to a moral government. But if its primary end does not respect agents distinctively, but the whole man (like the creation of him and a world for him to dwell in), or other animals, or the general constitution of the universe, then, though like all other things it was intended to furnish instructions and motives, it cannot fall within this department. To allude again to domestic government, it is one thing to build a house for the family to dwell in and receive the proper discipline, and another to construct a house in miniature for the purpose of teaching them some mechanical principles. Now we dare not conclude that any of the works of nature are held up as a splendid show, a dead picture to exhibit the divine perfections, but rather that they display the wisdom and goodness of God by answering some important end. This end is to decide where they are to fall in the division of departments.

It is the Moral Governor alone who is approached by creatures; and it is in this character that God is respected in almost all those efforts of creature agency which we call religion and virtue. It is almost solely in this character that he is the object of love, because it is almost exclusively in this that his moral perfections appear. Faith, perhaps, is still more limited. Besides election, and the first and second creation, and preservation, it has no other object than the Moral Governor with his provisions, acts, and declarations. That faith, without which it is impossible to please God, is a belief "that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11: 6. Instead of busying itself with the question whether I am elected, its proper office is to believe that God will be to me "a rewarder" if I diligently seek him. All the exercises of repentance and trust, and most of those of gratitude and submission, respect God in the same character. Obedience has no other object, for none but the Moral Governor commands. With him our business lies through the whole course of our active virtue. In every part we proceed as though nothing was settled from eternity, and except a submission to the eternal purpose of God, set ourselves to raise others to happiness as though we never heard of an absolute decree. We transact with the Moral Governor in almost all our worship. Prayer has no other object. Its concern lies not with election, but with the present will of him who "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Its sole encouragement is drawn from the promise of the Moral Governor; and a long pondering on election, by turning the eye from him, is apt to damp the spirit and discourage the effort. When we pray for the regeneration of others, we do not ask the Elector to change his eternal decrees; we address ourselves to the Moral Governor alone, and hope to be rewarded by an act which to them will not be a recompense.

A moral government wields all the motives in the universe. It comprehends the entire system of instruction intended for creatures. The Bible lies wholly within its bounds. It comprehends the public dispensation both of law and gospel, with the whole compages of precepts, invitations, promises, and threatenings. It comprehends the atonement, and all the covenants made with men, and all the institutions of religion, with the whole train of means and privileges. It comprehends the whole doctrine and process of justification, with all spiritual influences which either enlighten or reward. It comprehends a throne of grace, with all the answers to prayer. It comprehends a day of probation, with all the experiments made upon the human character. It comprehends the entire system of grace, with the bare exception of election and regeneration. It comprehends all the rewards and punish-

ments of the present life. It comprehends the day of judgment, and all the retributions of eternity. It comprehends all the sensible communion between the Infinite and finite minds; all the perceptible intercourse between God and his rational offspring; all the treatment of intelligent creatures viewed otherwise than as passive receivers of sovereign impressions. In short, it is the public government of God over the universe. And I may add, it forms the subject-matter of nine tenths, perhaps of ninety-nine hundredths of the Bible. Almost all the language of the world refers to agents and belongs to the dialect of a moral government. Surely this is not a part of the divine operations to be buried up under the tapestry of secret decrees. Surely the language which befits this great system of administration, and which expresses its vital principles, is not to be frittered away into figures of speech, into idioms after the manner of men, or laid aside for a dialect supposed to be better adapted to the secret counsels of the Incomprehensible Mind.

CHAPTER IX.

MORAL AGENTS TREATED AS IF THERE WAS NO FOREKNOWLEDGE.

THE only part of a moral government which discovers prescience is prophesy. All the other parts are framed together with the same consistency of relation as if there was no foreknowledge. Break up this principle, and plant the eye of prescience visibly in every part of a moral government, and you turn the whole into confusion; the entreaties of God to the non-elect would appear like mockery, and many of his declarations false. God proceeds in his treatment of moral agents as though it was perfectly uncertain how they will act till they are tried. The reason is, that the capacity and obligations on which the treatment is founded are in no degree affected by foreknowledge. This neither weakens an obligation, nor helps to create one which would not otherwise exist. It does not weaken an obligation, and therefore does not prevent the issuing of commands and invitations; for these only express the obligations of men with precision, without any thing prophetic as to their conduct or destiny. Nor yet does it help to create an obligation which would not otherwise exist. To this maxim I wish to draw particular attention. Were there no foreknowledge, neither the nature of things nor any command could impose on men an obligation to accept a privilege which in relation to them had no existence (for that would be a natural impossibility), nor, unless deceived, to believe the privilege to

be for them in such a sense that they could enjoy it by doing their duty ; for that would be an obligation to believe a lie. This would be common sense if there was no foreknowledge. Now what I assert is, that the foreknowledge of God that they would not accept the privilege if provided for them, did not render it proper for him, without providing it, to command them to receive it and to believe that it was provided for them. They could not be under obligation, nor could any command lay them under obligation, to accept a privilege which in relation to them had no existence, nor, unless deceived, to believe a lie. The inconsistency of attempting to impose such an obligation will appear by making the supposition (and of moral agents we have a right to make the supposition), that they should exert or try to exert, their agency in this way. The moment they should make the attempt, they would find one part a natural impossibility, and in performing the other, unless deceived, they would actually do wrong. No power, therefore, could lay upon them an obligation to accept a privilege, which, from the foreknowledge that they would reject it, had not been so provided for them that they could enjoy it by doing their duty. Accordingly the Moral Governor no more attempts to impose the obligation without providing the privilege, than would any fair and honorable man. He does not command impossibilities, secure in the foreknowledge that creatures will not obey, and then punish them for ever for not doing what no power with the best dispositions could have done. He does not thus take advantage of his superior knowledge to oppress. He does not thus practise upon the ignorance of creatures, sure at last to detect the imposition.

By this principle let us test the correctness of a fashionable similitude. A pearl, sufficient in value to redeem a thousand prisoners, is offered and accepted for a hundred. It being foreseen that none but the hundred will accept the offer of release, advantage is taken of the sufficiency of the price to tender liberty to the thousand and to command them to come out. This is the very simile chosen by some on the other side to exhibit the strength of their cause. I have nothing to do here with the propriety of the offer, my business is solely with the justice of the command. According to this representation, an attempt is made to fasten upon nine hundred prisoners, for whom no ransom has been paid, an obligation to come out on the ground of a ransom really offered for others, but only in appearance for them.* Now in this case it is not true that they could come out if they would obey the command. The

* The confusion here arises from not distinguishing between the higher ransom and the atonement. Because the former was not paid for all (that is, Christ did not so purchase all by his merit that he could claim them as his reward), atonement was not made for all.

reverse is true. If they should obey they would be stopped. And when they are told that they can come out if they will obey, a downright falsehood is imposed upon them, under security that they will not detect the imposition by making the attempt. And on this falsehood an essay is made to found an obligation,—an obligation to do a natural impossibility,—which but for the deception practised upon them they would see to be as impracticable as to make a world. The sufficiency of the price in this case is only a cover to conceal the imposture, and cannot be a ground of obligation. It cannot even seem to them to bear the most distant relation to an obligation, but by a palpable delusion. This, then, cannot be a just representation of that provision on which God rests the general obligation of men to accept the atonement. It must be true, that, just as the provision now is, and not as it would have been had their faith been foreseen, they can be pardoned in consistency with the honor of the law if they will believe; a supposition which we have none the less right to make of agents on account of the foreknowledge that they would not believe.

Now if the atonement is for all in such a sense, that, just as it now is, they may be pardoned by it if they will believe, it is an atonement for all in the highest sense in which it can be for moral agents.

CHAPTER X.

MORAL AGENTS TREATED CONDITIONALLY.

THE evidence of this fact is found in the conditions on which salvation is offered on every page of the Bible, and in all the promises and threatenings both of law and gospel. Men have started at the idea of conditions under a dispensation of grace, as partaking too much of a legal character: but when the nature of a condition in a moral government is explained, it will be found to be an essential ingredient in all that treatment of moral agents which is accompanied with authority. Where the holy agency of creatures is a necessary antecedent to the enjoyment of any good, the Moral Governor states the fact. The statement of that fact, accompanied with the authority with which he cannot but require the holy action, is all that is meant by a condition in a moral government. A condition is only that fact stated with authority. You cannot therefore separate conditions from the authoritative treatment of agents, so long as their holiness is essential to their happiness, and so long as God in any way pronounces that fact. It is only because men are con-

templated purely as passive that conditions are excluded; and in that view they are consistently excluded, for they belong only to the treatment of moral agents. Nor are conditions inconsistent with free grace, unless the requirement of holiness as essential to happiness is inconsistent with free grace. Nor yet do conditions imply any thing incompatible with absolute promises. They are used, we shall see, in the treatment of believers who are already embraced by an absolute covenant, and even after they have attained to the full assurance of hope, nay after they have reached their eternal home.

In those measures of a moral government which are accompanied with no authority, conditions of course do not appear; for instance, in those sovereign gifts which are suited to a state of probation. In these God appears not the Lawgiver, but the merciful and long suffering Saviour, who is willing to afford men the best opportunity to prepare for their last account, to grant them a state of tranquillity suited to reflection, and to encourage their faith with abundant tokens of his mercy.

The only case connected with authority in which consequences are not suspended on conditions, is where absolute good is secured as a reward for conditions already fulfilled. Thus all the absolute promises and irrevocable grants made to the church and its individual members, in relation to themselves or their seed, are gracious rewards for acts already done, or a character already formed.

But the authoritative treatment of pure agents (or agents considered without reference to the Spirit) is never absolute. These irrevocable grants respect men in the double character of agents and passive receivers of sanctifying impressions. To the agents they are a reward, but they are to be executed by sanctifying impressions on the passive; and the very promise implies a security of spiritual aid, for no such grants are made to men viewed as apostates. In like manner the absolute promises respecting the seed imply that they shall be sanctified. But whatever promises are made to men, or to their parents concerning them, with a special reference to their passive character, yet when these same persons come to be directly dealt with as pure agents, the issue is still suspended on their own conduct. Thus the promises to Abraham that his seed should possess the land of Canaan and all the blessings of the church, were absolute, Gen. 12: 7. 13: 14-17. 17: 7, 8. 28: 4, 13-15. 48: 4. 50: 24. Exod. 2: 24. 6: 3-8. 12: 25. Deut. 4: 37. 10: 15. 12: 20. 26: 18, 19. Josh. 21: 43-45. 22: 4. 23: 5, 10. Ps. 105: 6-45; and yet the whole issue was suspended on their own conduct. Exod. 23: 20, 22. Lev. 20: 22. 26: 41, 42. Num. 14: 30, 34. Deut. 1: 8. 4: 1, 25-31, 40. 5: 16, 33. 6: 3, 15, 18. 7: 7-15. 8: 1. 11: 9, 21. 12:

28. 13: 17. 19: 8, 9. 28: 11. 30: 16, 20. 32: 47. 2 Chron. 33: 8. Jer. 11: 4, 5. 35: 15. Zech. 11: 10. And the way in which these two things are reconciled is, their holy character was secured. Gen. 18: 18, 19. Thus also the promise to David that his seed should possess the throne of Israel was absolute, 2 Sam. 7: 12–16. 2 Chron. 13: 5. Ps. 89: 3, 4, 28–37; and yet the privilege was suspended on their obedience. 1 Kings 2: 3, 4. 3: 14. 8: 25, 26. 9: 1–9. 1 Chron. 22: 9–13. 28: 7. 2 Chron. 7: 17–22. Ps. 132: 12. Jer. 17: 25. In like manner the promises to Christ respecting the elect were absolute, as are also the promises to believers as recipients of the Spirit; and yet when the elect, and even believers, come to be treated as pure agents, the issue is still suspended on their own conduct. And this is sometimes done by lips which at the same moment are speaking of the covenant of grace, and the general consequences of Christ's death, and its express acceptance for our justification. Thus a moral government, in dealing with pure agents, is so regardless of the decrees and promises and influences which respect the passive, that it goes around them and wanders over them, without appearing to see them. Take the following specimens. "It was not written for his sake alone that" faith "was imputed to him" for righteousness; "but for us also [certainly including millions of the elect and even of believers], to whom it shall be imputed *if* we believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." "In whom we have redemption through his blood. — And he is the Head of the body, the church. — For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and (having made peace through the blood of his cross), by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight, *if ye continue* in the faith." "*If* that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall *continue* in the Son and in the Father." "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, — if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance. — But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love. — Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. — For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. — If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw

back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Rom. 4: 23-25. Col. 1: 14-23. Heb. 6: 4-11. 10: 23-39. 1 John 2: 24.

Even after believers are assured that their present character is holy, and that as recipients they shall continue to receive effectual aid, as agents they are still treated conditionally. Paul himself, with all his confidence, was still taught to suspend his salvation on his own persevering holiness. "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a cast-away." 1 Cor. 9: 27. The principle of employing threats to stimulate agents to the attainment of a good already pronounced certain, is exemplified in an occurrence which took place in this same apostle's voyage to Rome. He had declared by revelation that there should "be no loss of any man's life." And yet when the sailors were about clandestinely to leave the ship, he disclosed their purpose and affirmed, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved." Acts 27: 22-31.

Though a distinct announcement of threats is fitted only to a state of probation, yet an authoritative connecting of holiness and happiness must remain while creatures continue under government. Even the penalty of the law must continue to furnish motives. Christ did not die to support a penalty of transient importance, and which after a few years should cease to have any influence upon agents. He did not die to separate the penalty from the law after probation should end, and thus annihilate the vigor of a moral government to eternity. Paul is still under the empire of law, and a law of course which is supported by a penalty; a penalty which, instead of being annihilated at Calvary, continually draws new strength from the tragedy there displayed. At the same time that as a recipient he hears the covenant say that his sanctification shall be perpetuated, as an agent he hears the law say not only that he shall die for past transgressions, but that he shall die for every one which he may hereafter commit. And though he is not under law as a covenant of works, and would be pardoned by grace (as after he was united to Christ on earth), even should he commit many sins, yet the mediation of Christ never provided that a slave of sin should be taken out of the hands of law. Should Paul apostatize to complete and continued rebellion (which as an agent he is capable of doing), the law would still take its course upon him. And if his continued holiness is thus necessary to his continued happiness, and that fact is in any way pronounced by the same authority that requires his holiness (and without that fact lurking more or less visibly behind the command there is no authority), then he hears the divine authority (the same that once spoke in the gospel) say, that if he returns to confirmed rebellion he shall be delivered over to the law, and

be punished moreover as a gospel despiser. But how, you ask, can such a motive influence Paul when he knows that he shall be kept from falling? A man is held from throwing himself from the top of a building, and knows he shall be held. He knows also that if he should throw himself down he would be dashed in pieces. The knowledge of the latter fact prevents him from being willing to take the leap. While Paul is held from falling by an influence on him as passive, and knows that he shall be held, he needs motives as an agent to make him willing to stand. He could not be willing without motives, whatever divine power should be exerted upon him. Why, then, you ask, is not Paul still on probation, as much at least as after he had attained to the full assurance of hope on earth? Because he is openly confirmed in holiness and happiness by way of reward. When the agent is thus publicly rewarded by confirmation, the agent is no longer on probation. An assured hope of that reward was not the possession. This it is, and not the absence of conditions, which distinguishes heaven from a state of probation.*

This mode of treating pure agents, notwithstanding the absolute promises which respect the same creatures in the double character of agents and recipients, rests on the three following reasons.

(1) There is nothing in their dependence nor in the promised influence to prevent them from being, in respect to the very thing to which they are to be inclined, complete agents, with all the obligations of agents, and with an unbroken relation to the authority and claims of the Moral Governor. Of course it is proper for him to treat them as agents, with no more reference to the promised influence than he has to election in his commands to the wicked; and to require their duty in the tone of a lawgiver, who, as such, must always appear with a penalty in his hand.

(2) There is nothing in the promised influence to weaken the indissoluble connection between their holy action and the salvation contemplated. The promise did not engage to dispense with that action, but to secure it. The connection between the action and the salvation is as close as though the stipulation had not been made, and may be pointed out and insisted on without contradicting the promise. Two things are true of them: as passive they will receive effectual aid; as agents they must continue in holiness or die. The latter proposition authoritatively

* This shows that the threats held out in the Bible against apostasy are no evidence against the perseverance of the saints. They are rather the means by which the perseverance of holy agents is secured. It shows also that the conditional treatment of believers is not inconsistent with the completeness of their justification. The irrevocable title to life made over in their justification, comprehended, and secured to them as recipients, their continued sanctification; but still, as pure agents, they might continue to be treated conditionally. I will add, that the new relation is not the less real or complete for not being certainly known to the subject.

pronounced, amounts to all that is contained in a divine threat. The way, then, is open, as though the promise did not exist, for the Moral Governor to display the infrangible connection between their holiness and happiness with all the authority and claim attached to his office.

(3) While as recipients they stand related to an absolute promise, as agents they must still be carried along by motives. Moral agents cannot act without motives, whatever exertion of sanctifying power is made. This exercise of authority furnishes the very motives required. While probation lasts, a form of more distinct menace is used, as better calculated to influence the church at large. It proclaims the necessity of persevering holiness in tones of awful majesty and terror; and these, coming to the ears of multitudes who are still in doubt about their salvation, are calculated to stimulate them to exertion as the only means of making their calling and election sure. Nor is this form lost upon those who at present possess the full assurance of hope, for it stands ready to rouse them to action whenever their graces languish, and their hopes of course decline.

Thus it appears that neither the covenant with Christ nor the absolute promises to believers prevent their salvation from still being suspended on their own conduct; that neither election nor oaths break up that conditionality which pervades every part of the treatment of pure agents. It ought not, therefore, to seem strange if notwithstanding all the absolute decrees and covenants connected with the work of redemption, that provision for agents which we call the atonement should be found to be conditional. It must fall under this fundamental law of a moral government. For, in the first place, the holy action of men towards it was necessary to their enjoyment of its benefit. They could not be pardoned by it till as agents they had believed. In the second place, from the moment it met the eyes of men (and the whole provision was made in public), it was encircled on all sides with authority, peremptorily demanding their faith. Here, then, are the two circumstances which call forth a condition in all other cases. It was a matter connected with authority, and the enjoyment of it did depend on the very faith which was demanded. Only one thing more was necessary. Did God state the latter fact? If he did, you have all that goes into the definition of a condition in a moral government. Then, in producing the atonement before the world, he authoritatively pronounced that the enjoyment of it depended on the faith of men. And there is the condition on the very face of the express purpose.

If the atonement was offered for agents (and none else needed expiation or satisfaction, and none else could receive pardon), then it was a provision to benefit them upon their acting the part of agents towards

it, or else the essential attributes of agents are divided. If the effect was not suspended on that effort of their agency, it was not made for agents (for creatures capable of acting, and on whose action their happiness depends), but for the purely passive, for men in a character in which they had not sinned.

After the atonement was accepted, God was bound either to pardon believers as believers, or the elect as elect. And if you can tell which, you can tell for which description it was accepted, and of course for which it was offered. If God did not engage to pardon any by the atonement till as agents they had believed, then it was never offered or accepted with any intention that it should benefit men as mere elect, but only those who should believe. That act is as much their own, and as essential to the benefit, and as authoritatively pronounced to be so, as though there was no Spirit. And this is the full definition of a condition.

In settling the extent of the atonement in this light, the only question is, was the benefit suspended on the faith of a particular number of men, or was it plainly declared that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish?" The question is answered.

When our brethren oppose the idea of conditions, they have a very different matter in their eye. Their question is about the secret purpose of the divine mind, and how many, as the reward of his merit, Christ obtained a right to rescue from sin and death by an operation on them as passive. And therefore they ask not about the atonement, but about the end of his death as a whole. And when they have limited the question to the secret purpose of the divine persons, they find the omniscience of God arrayed against conditions. "To die conditionally for a person is a strange mode of speaking, especially as it relates to One who is omniscient." If our question had been before the writer, he would not have employed such an argument as this. For who will say that conditions are excluded from a government over moral agents, though exercised by an omniscient God? The meaning of the writer comes out more fully. "It will be pretended that Christ died for all, but suspended the benefit of his death upon a condition. Be it so. Then when Christ died he knew whether that condition would ever take place, or rather he knew that it never would in those to whom he had determined not to give faith. And to say that a person does a thing to take effect on a certain condition, which he is sure will never occur, is the same as to say that he does a thing without any view to that effect." Plainly fastening the attention to the secret purpose of Christ. But who, except an Arminian, ever thought that the secret purpose of Christ about the application of his death by regeneration was conditional? The limitation of the writer's

meaning to the secret purpose is still more obvious. "If he died for them only on some condition, then if that condition never takes place, he did not die for them." That is, if he never imparts faith to them as recipients, he did not die with any intention to make them partakers of his atonement by such an operation. And no one says he did. We have nothing to do with the secret purpose of Christ about an operation on passive recipients. We are only inquiring about a provision for moral agents, and whether in the declared purpose for which it was publicly brought forward, their faith was not demanded as a necessary antecedent to its application, and whether it was not pronounced applicable to all indiscriminately who would believe.

But no account is made of all this through the constant confounding of expiation with the claim of merit. "They [the Scriptures] require, indeed, faith as an instrument of receiving the benefits of Christ's death: but that very faith is the effect of Christ's meritorious death and prevalent intercession, and is, of course, bestowed on all those for whom he shed his precious blood." "The death of Christ, considered in unison with his obedience, is the meritorious cause of all spiritual blessings. It is, therefore, the cause of the gift of faith. Those, therefore, for whom Christ has died, will, sooner or later, in consequence of that offering, be made partakers of faith, with which all spiritual blessings are connected." All this is true of the higher ransom, or the united influence of expiation and merit: but the atonement had no concern with securing the gift of faith.

And yet because the Scriptures speak of the higher ransom as absolute, it is insisted that the atonement itself was not conditional. "It is nowhere said [in the Bible] that Christ died to render it possible for God to receive sinners on such terms as he might choose to appoint." Where, then, is that passage found which says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish?"

The same confusion between the higher and lower ransom leads to such as this: "It is an unworthy thought of the Almighty Saviour, that he should permit Satan to triumph over millions of those whom he purchased with his own blood." If this is said of the higher ransom, I agree; but if it is said of the lower ransom or atonement, the apostle Peter thought not so; for he expressly tells us of those "who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." 2 Pet. 2: 1.

It is only of the higher ransom that the following assertion is true. "If — Christ has laid down his life and shed his blood for the redemption of any of our race, and if God as the universal Governor has ac-

cepted the ransom in their behalf, it cannot be otherwise but that it will have the effect of obtaining, sooner or later, their actual redemption." This is true of that ransom whose absolute and unfailing influence lies in the claim of merit to a reward. And yet the same affirmation is undistiguishingly extended to the expiation and satisfaction. "If they [our sins] are really expiated, they never can rise in judgment against us." "It will be said that this satisfaction screens from punishment those only to whom it is applied. But I answer, if really made for any individuals, it will be applied to their benefit." This is a specimen of the whole reasoning. Because merit secured to Christ the regeneration and pardon of the elect as his reward, expiation and satisfaction must be equally absolute. But where is the proof of this? It is easy to construct popular arguments founded on inapplicable analogies; but we want some tangible proof that for a certain number of moral agents expiation and satisfaction were made absolutely, that is, without respect to their character; and we must have proof as strong as the oath of God before we can set aside a thousand texts to the contrary.

But it is said that the atonement was offered for the elect absolutely, yet not carrying with it this implication, be their character what it may, because the character itself was secured. But what secured it? Not the atonement. That provision for moral agents was a world by itself, and in its arrangements and form took no notice of such an impression to be made upon passive subjects.

In the same spirit it is alleged that the atonement was made absolutely for the elect viewed as believers. In answer to the objection, "If Christ died not for me I cannot be saved, because there is no atonement for me," it is said, "The cause of your perishing is your own unbelief; for if you had been viewed as a believer when the atonement was made, you would have been included." What is the meaning of this? Was faith foreseen as anterior in the order of nature to the atonement itself? and was this the reason that expiation was made for the elect? And were the non-elect excluded from the provision because of their unbelief, when it is said in the same paper that all the faith in the world was obtained by the death of Christ?

The atonement made for the elect absolutely as believers! I admit that the merit of Christ absolutely procured for them the gift of faith; yet not for them as believers, but as unbelievers. And how, before a man has faith, a thing can be done for him as a believer, and yet be done for him absolutely, is hard to tell. If the influence of the thing is to secure his faith, it is for him, not as a believer, but as an unbeliever.* If the

* The atonement therefore could not secure the gift of faith, unless it was offered for unbelievers.

influence of the thing does not secure his faith, and yet was done to benefit him only as a believer, it suspended the effect on his own act as certainly as faith is an act of his own. No matter how sure that act was made by another influence, yet if he cannot enjoy the benefit without performing a duty, the enjoyment is suspended on his performing a duty. If men have any agency in believing, to say that the atonement was made for them absolutely as believers is to say that it was made for them absolutely on the condition of their faith. This manner of viewing things entirely overlooks the agency of man, and makes him as passive in believing as in the complexion he wears. Before one is born a provision may be made for him as a white man and yet be absolute, because he has no part to act in forming his own complexion; not so for a good man, if that goodness implies any agency of his own. This is the grand mistake which runs through the system. They everywhere sink the agency of man in the mere receiver, and reason about him as though he was a passive tablet.

Thus this concession, that the elect were included in the provision as believers and that the non-elect were excluded only for the want of faith, is really giving up the point. For then the latter would still be included if they would believe. And that is all the provision we plead for. No, you say, it is now too late: from their foreseen unbelief the pearl was not offered for them. The question, then, comes to this, did the atonement render those pardonable indiscriminately who would believe, or only those who it was foreseen would believe?

It must never be lost sight of, that the satisfaction was in no sense or degree made in secret. We have nothing to do with the hidden purpose of the divine mind, or any private covenant between the sacred persons. The whole question turns on the construction to be put upon the public instrument. If, in those open transactions and explanations which constituted the whole atonement, and laid before the world the express purpose, it was given out that it was offered for those who should receive faith, then it was offered absolutely for the elect, and the elect alone. But if it was declared to be offered for the benefit of all indiscriminately who would exercise faith, then it was a provision for a whole world of agents, and its application was suspended on a condition.

This was manifestly the fact. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sin." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends *if* ye do whatsoever I command you." I die a Substitute for you, Peter and John, *if* ye obey me. "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." "Christ is the end of

the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference, for all have sinned." John 6: 40. 15: 13, 14. Acts 10: 43. Rom. 3: 22, 23. 10: 4.

Now if the atonement was thus conditional as to its application, it could not as a provision be limited to a part, unless the condition was to some a natural impossibility. For then it could have no other effect on Paul than to secure his pardon when he should believe, and it must secure to all a pardon in case they would believe. Here, then (allowing faith not to be a natural impossibility), is a provision for all as capable agents, and such a provision as gives them all a fair chance. It would be different if they were passive blocks. Here is a feast for all who are found in a certain house. The whole multitude without are able to enter if so disposed. There is, then, a provision for all in such a sense as to give them all a fair chance. It would be different if they were chained to the earth. So a bounty given to a seminary to be divided among the scholars who prove diligent, is, by the very circumstance of its conditionality, a provision for the whole school as capable agents.

CHAPTER XI.

BELIEVER AND UNBELIEVER CONFOUNDED WITH ELECT AND NON-ELECT,
AND WITH MAN AS A CAPABLE AGENT.

WHEN we say that the atonement was for Simon Magus, we mean that it was a provision for him as a capable agent. But when our brethren deny that it was for him, they constantly allude to the secret purpose of God about its application. And from fastening their eye thus on the secret purpose, which respected passive receivers of regenerating influence, they have in a great measure lost sight of man as a capable agent, and reasoned about him as though he had nothing to do with exercising faith, but only with receiving it. Hence they tell us, if the atonement was made to benefit believers, and not unbelievers, it was not made for Simon Magus, for he was never to believe. Here again comes out the fault of the whole system. It was not a provision for him as a capable agent, because it was not to benefit one of his character; entirely burying his agency, and making the character as passively received and as essential to the man as complexion and sex. Had it been for white men and not for black men, or for men and not for women, you might have

said of that Ethiopian that it was not for him, or of this female that it was not for her. Or if it had been publicly and avowedly offered for the receivers of faith, and not for the benefit of believers, then you might have said that it was not for Simon Magus, for he was never to receive faith. But, if it was publicly offered for the use of all indiscriminately who as agents would believe, and Simon was not a dead mass of matter, but endowed with natural ability to believe, then it was a complete provision for him as a capable agent. And then unbelief was not essential to him, like mind itself, but was a character which he had assumed on his own responsibility. The man will be charged with an atonement which was never made to benefit the unbeliever. But our brethren first sink the man in the unbeliever, and then make the unbeliever the mere non-recipient of faith.

And when they have thus annihilated human agency, and set men before them as mere passive receivers or non-receivers of faith, then they proceed with perfect consistency and say: if the atonement was made to benefit believers and not unbelievers, it was not made for the non-elect, for they will never believe. Here they get unbelievers and non-elect confounded. Now believer and unbeliever denote agents of certain characters, but elect and non-elect are terms of passive import, like chosen and rejected, and denote men passively appointed to receive, or not to receive, regenerating influence. But in arriving at this point they make no new mistake. When they have set men before them, not as those who are to exercise faith, but as those who are to receive it, and make them entirely passive in their faith and unbelief, it is no matter whether they exclude them as unbelievers, or as men passively appointed to be non-recipients of faith. Had the atonement not been for black men or for women, you might have said that it was not for those who were fore-ordained to that complexion or sex; that is, you might have affirmed the same thing of them as appointed to such a distinction, that you would assert of them as actually possessing it, because in the appointment and the possession they are equally passive. So if men were as passive in their unbelief as they are in their non-election, you might affirm the same thing of them as non-elect that you do of them as unbelievers. But now to confound these terms, is to bury up their agency in rejecting the gospel, and utterly to change the principles of the divine administration. Because men are denied the benefits of the atonement as unbelievers, you exclude them as non-elect. But to debar them as non-elect is to cut them off without their own fault; to shut them out as unbelievers is to make their own sinful rejection of the gospel the ground of their exclusion. In short, this confounding of unbelievers and non-elect completely

overlooks the agency of men, and brings into use such a language as would befit them if they were mere machines.

And yet this very practice gives to our brethren almost all the texts which even have the semblance of supporting their cause, and it appears also in a number of their terms and popular arguments. Thus because Christ laid "down his life for his friends," they infer that he died only for the elect. "If a man pay a ransom price to redeem his own friends from captivity, however great the price, or however many others may be in captivity, yet when it is inquired, for whom was the price paid? the answer is, for his friends whom he designed to redeem." But if the atonement of Christ was to benefit all who would be his friends, it was a provision for all as capable agents, for no natural inability, and nothing but a blamable temper, prevents any from being his friends. In the same manner whatever is said of the church ("the general assembly" of heirs, the people who "in the dispensation of the fulness of times" are gathered "together in one—in Christ," the body with its living members compacted together and drawing present life from the Head, the bride already married to Christ by a voluntary covenant), they apply unqualifiedly to the elect. Eph. 1: 10, 22, 23. 4: 16. Heb. 12: 23. Rev. 21: 9. But though in one or two places the body of believers, under the name of the church, are spoken of with special reference to their antecedent election, and to their redemption from sin by the larger ransom, yet the unregenerate elect are never comprehended under the name of church. Thus, too, whatever is said of the sheep (the flock, by whose footsteps believers are exhorted to go forth, who are under the sensible care of the good Shepherd, and are led by him into "green pastures" and "beside the still waters," who know him, and hear his voice, and follow him, and will stand on his right hand to receive a gracious reward), they apply to the elect as such, merely because once, by way of anticipation, Christ calls the unregenerate elect his sheep. Ps. xxii. Cant. 1: 7, 8. Matt. 25: 33. John 10: 14, 16, 27.* And they reason about the sheep and

* In this chapter Christ sets before him the sheep as a flock already gathered and under his care; and in what he says about laying down his life for them, he alludes to the fidelity of a shepherd in exposing his life to defend his flock, actually assembled around him, from beasts of prey. "The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is a hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling and careth not for the sheep. I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.—My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." He had begun the discourse by saying, "He [that pastor in the church] that entereth in by the door [Christ is the door, ver. 7, 9], is the shepherd of the sheep [of the church, or body of believers].

goats as though these terms denoted the elect and non-elect, when in fact, with the single exception already noticed, they uniformly stand for the good and bad.* In the same way they make the seed of the serpent to mean the non-elect, and argue that the seed of the woman would not die for the seed of the serpent; as though the elect themselves were not the seed of the serpent while continuing to possess the spirit of the serpent. In the same way they make the people of God to be synonymous with elect. "For whom Christ offered himself as a sacrifice, for the same does he intercede (for his priestly office is not performed for any by halves): but he intercedes, it is agreed, for none but his own people: therefore he died for none but his own people." "He intercedes, it is agreed, for none but his own people!" But who are his own people? Not the elect as such, not the unconverted elect, but believers. "In the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall

To him the porter openeth, and the sheep [believers] hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out [from other sheep who are false professors]. And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them [in a way of holy example and instruction], and the sheep follow him [in a life of holiness]; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers. — All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them." In all this he meant nothing by sheep but members of the visible church, and except one allusion to false professors, true believers. He then changes the figure, and from the door through which the under shepherds enter, he becomes the Shepherd himself: but still the primary meaning of sheep is believers. When he calls the elect Gentiles his sheep, it is plainly by anticipation; but when he speaks of laying down his life for his sheep, he means for the gathered and existing flock, such a flock as a hireling Jewish pastor would abandon to the wolves. This was accomplished when it was said, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd." But who at that time were the flock? the unregenerate elect, or believers? It is added, "Smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." This, we are expressly told, was fulfilled when the twelve disciples forsook him and fled. Zech. 13: 7. Matt. 26: 31. In another place, by the sheep which he came to save he plainly means believers, viewed with reference to their lost condition as sinners. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones. — For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Matt. 18: 10-14. On another occasion he gave a similar representation to justify himself in associating with publicans and sinners, who, with Matthew at their head, flocked to catch the word of life from his lips. Luke xv. with ch. 5: 27-32. But notwithstanding all this evidence that by the sheep for which he laid down his life he meant believers, I have admitted that in the assertion he glanced at the previous election of those believers, and at the special reference which he had to them as his reward.

* Unless John 10: 26 is an exception.

be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God." "I will call them my people which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved." Hos. 1: 10. Rom. 9: 25, 26. If by this exclusive intercession you mean that Christ pleads for the pardon and acceptance of none but believers, we agree; but what is this to the purpose? We never thought that he died to procure the pardon and acceptance of any but believers. I suppose that the intercession of Christ is the silent plea or influence of his expiation and merit (for it is not limited to pardon), John xvii.; and that of course it is just so far offered for all as his expiation and merit affect all. He intercedes, then, that millions who are never saved may have a day of probation, and the offer of life, and the common and convicting influences of the Spirit. He intercedes that all indiscriminately may be saved who will believe, offering thus his effectual intercession to all, and making it to all a complete provision for moral agents. "He is able—to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7: 25. He intercedes that the elect may have the gift of faith: and when as agents they believe, he employs for them that full intercession which he offers to others. After the same manner, when the sacred writers say that Christ atoned for them, our brethren will always have it that they speak of themselves as elect, and not as moral agents and believers. But this is assumed without a particle of proof. In this way it is that they find an atonement which accomplishes reconciliation. They hear the apostles say that they and other believers had been saved from wrath by the blood of Christ, meaning that as believers they had been pardoned on the ground of the atonement; and they at once conclude that all this is said of them as elect, and that of course the atonement reconciles all for whom it was offered.

In this way it is that they discover in the Scriptures so many appearances of a limited atonement. Take away those texts which speak of believers, and they will be surprised to find how few remain which glance at any special reference to the elect. The whole of this number which I have been able to discover, after examining the collection made by the Synod of Dort, were presented in a former chapter; and they express either the power of the larger ransom, or the reference of Christ to the elect as his reward. Not one of them touches the question now in debate. I have been struck with the fact that in an ingenious treatise lately written to prove a limited atonement, when the author came to produce his direct texts, in the form of a distinct argument, he quoted but these two: "I lay down my life for the sheep," and, "The church—which he hath purchased with his own blood;" two texts, of which (if they are not limited to believers) the former expresses the special

reference of Christ to the elect as his reward, and the latter the power of the larger ransom. For the rest the author chiefly relies on election, foreknowledge, the secret purpose of God, and the limitation of the larger ransom; neither of which is denied, or has any thing to do with the present question.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TREATMENT OF AGENTS BY ITSELF EXPRESSES DIVINE BENEVOLENCE.

GOD feels a benevolence towards all his creatures, even towards those whom he never sanctifies. That is, he does not delight in their misery, but delights in their happiness as a thing in itself agreeable, and would never sacrifice their happiness but to promote a higher good. This benevolence towards the unsanctified he is able to express otherwise than in words, or he is not. If not, he can never bring any proof of its existence, except what depends on his treatment of the sanctified. If he can express this benevolence in actions, it must be by the mere treatment of agents.

And this is the fact. Those measures which are calculated to promote the happiness of creatures if they will do their duty, do really express his benevolence towards them, though never attended with sanctifying influence. That foundation in moral agents which give to the measures this expression is their capacity to use them for their good, or what we call their natural ability. For if they had no more power to derive happiness from them than stocks, the treatment, so far from being an expression of benevolence, would be a mockery. But with that power, all those provisions and mercies, all that display of light and motives and long-suffering, which are calculated to promote their happiness if they will do their duty, are indications of that common benevolence which God feels towards all. If they are no indications without sanctifying influence, any more than if men were blocks, what becomes of the capacity on which all their obligations are grounded? It is plainly no adequate foundation to support any of the measures of a moral government; and those measures without the Spirit are as unsuited to men as to the beasts of the field or the clods of the valley.

Now apply this to the atonement. By such a provision for those who eventually perish, God puts remission within the reach of their natural power, and lays them under reasonable obligations to live, and fastens

the blame of their destruction on themselves, and wipes off the charge of forcing them to death against their will. And all this he instructs us to believe is a genuine expression of benevolence towards them, and if he is sincere it really is. If any thing which he can do can indicate his philanthropy towards them, what more than making, at so vast an expense, such a provision for their pardon that nothing but their own distinct and voluntary agency can work their ruin? Any thing analogous to this in human affairs would certainly be indicative of love; and God has no way to discover his feelings towards the persons of the unsanctified but by conduct according with the manner of men. If his foreknowledge or failure to sanctify must silence that expression, there is no way in which he can act out the real temper of his heart towards the persons of those who perish. How, then, came we by the knowledge that such a temper exists?

This provision for the finally impenitent, he himself teaches us to believe, makes the same expression of character as though he had no foreknowledge or dominion over the mind. And if we find any difficulty in viewing it apart, and giving full credit to the discoveries which it separately makes, we ought to put it down to the weakness of our apprehensions, to the incapacity of a finite mind to comprehend the Infinite, on whom it devolves not only to govern the universe by law and motives, but to form the dispositions of his creatures. But certainly it was his intention to make an impression on us that he is in all respects what he appears in a moral government to be. Certain it is that when he provided an atonement which all might have for accepting, and which all had natural ability and were under obligations to accept, he intended to make an impression on us of his real benevolence towards the whole human race. What does he plainly say? "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." "As I live—I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Deut. 32: 29. Ezek. 33: 11. Matt. 23: 37. John 3: 16, 17. 1 Tim. 2: 4. 2 Pet. 3: 9. If by fastening our eyes on foreknowledge and election, and the passiveness of men, we get confused and lose somewhat of the expression which the atonement really makes, yet,

without the most blasphemous imputations, we cannot doubt that these declarations of the Moral Governor explain the genuine feelings of his heart. We may be assured that we convey right ideas of him when we say, that his exertions for the salvation of the wicked Israelites proceeded from unfeigned love. What does he tell us himself? "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bore them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy and fought against them." "I removed his shoulder from the burden, his hands were delivered from the pots. Thou calledst in trouble and I delivered thee, I answered thee in the secret place of thunder, I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own heart's lust, and they walked in their own counsels. O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries." Ps. 81: 6-14. Isa. 63: 9, 10. We may be assured that we convey right ideas of him when we say that he sent the gospel to the inhabitants of Capernaum for their good, as an act of unfeigned mercy, and from perfect good-will to them. The whole ministry of Christ to that city was evidently intended to make this impression: And what was the meaning of his tears over Jerusalem? Did they discover no interest in the happiness of its inhabitants?

But it is flatly denied that the death of Christ was any expression of benevolence to the non-elect; and the church has heard the affecting denial. "What induced him to die for these, seeing he had passed them, and in the language of Scripture hated them? If he died for them, he either had a motive or not. If he had, what was it? Not any peculiar love, for this he entertained not. Was it from some general affection to them as creatures? but they had forfeited all regard from the Creator." This distressing suggestion by fair implication goes all the way of affirming that nothing which God can do is expressive of benevolence to those whom he fails to sanctify; that all the bounties and efforts of heaven are no indications of mercy or goodness while men are bent on their own destruction; that neither the creation nor preservation of the non-elect, neither temporal blessings nor the means of grace are any tokens of good-will to them; in short, that God has no benevolence towards them, not even a "general affection to them as creatures." And have we come to this! that some of the rational creatures of God are excluded from his benevolence! What feelings, then, has he towards them? Is it absolute indifference? or is it malice? But God's professions are far

different. He distinctly claims the praise of benevolence for his common mercies to the evil and unthankful, and in these acts sets himself forth as an example of genuine love to enemies. "Love your enemies, — that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Before "all nations," even while they were left "to walk in their own ways," "he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave" them "rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling" their "hearts with food and gladness." Ps. 145 : 9. Matt. 5 : 44, 45. Acts 14 : 16, 17. Rom. 2 : 4. But all this 'upon your plan is a delusive show, and the bounties of God to the heathen discovered only his existence and power, which alone could not render them "without excuse."

According to this alarming principle the non-elect have no reason but ignorance of their own reprobation to thank God for any thing he has ever done ; and when they awake in hell they will never again accuse themselves of ingratitude to eternity. And yet unthankfulness is numbered among their worst sins. 2 Tim. 3 : 2. In short, the pernicious influence of this sentiment is to persuade all men, in proportion as they waver about their own election, to doubt whether they have any cause to thank God for their existence, or for one of all his mercies. And what must be the tendency of such a doctrine, no one, I should think, could doubt.

In opposition to all this I plead that the death of Christ, so far as it is known, lays the whole human race under obligations to gratitude, not founded on any opinion which they may form of their own election, or on the darkness which may hang around that question, but on a vast and obvious and common benefit, strongly marked with benevolence to the race at large ; that every man, without waiting to ascertain his future destiny, is bound to bless God "for his unspeakable gift," and to acknowledge the greatness of the love in relation to himself.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PURPOSES OF THE MORAL GOVERNOR NOT TO BE CONFOUNDED WITH
THOSE OF THE SOVEREIGN EFFICIENT CAUSE.

WHAT, then, has God two minds? No, but he acts in two characters, founded on the two relations of men; two characters in most respects independent of each other, because the two relations of men are equally independent; two characters, as far as they are independent, just as distinct as though they belonged to two separate beings: and you may speak of the designs of the Moral Governor and the designs of the sovereign efficient cause as distinctly as though they were the counsels of two minds; and in many respects you must speak so, or not express the truth in intelligible language.

If the treatment of agents by itself expresses the divine benevolence, then you must speak of God in that character in which he stands related to agents, as constructing his measures for their good: for to say that a measure is not constructed for their good, and yet that it expresses benevolence towards them, is a contradiction, according to all the language established and understood in the world. And if we must say of the Moral Governor (without reference to election or regeneration, which lie out of his sphere), that he constructs his measures for their good, then we must say that he designs them for their good. In all other cases known to men, the unqualified design of the agent is necessary to the benevolent expression of the action: and without the ascription of such a design to the Moral Governor, there is no conveying to the multitude the idea, and turning over the idea in all its familiar forms, that the measures express his benevolence. We must, therefore, make the ascription, without any misgivings on account of foreknowledge or election, or we have no way to affirm intelligibly and familiarly of any measure unaccompanied by sanctification, that it expresses the benevolence of God.

It answers an important end for God to appear before his creatures in a character which stands related to agents, and to speak of himself, and allow his creatures to speak of him, in a form which would express the benevolence of a temporal prince who had no control over the minds of his subjects but by motives, and in that character to say, "O that they were wise!" and, "Turn ye, for why will ye die?" It gives him an opportunity to express towards millions a benevolence which otherwise would not be revealed, and to treat his creatures according to their rational nature. And there is no deception in the case. The Being who sustains this character means not to say that he does not support another,

in which he can control the heart, or that the Divine Mind is really disappointed. He takes abundant care to guard against this mistake. He only means to express his benevolence by a language and measures fitted to moral agents. And it is of infinite importance that he should have full credit for all the exhibitions made in this character. But the moment you deny to the Moral Governor all purpose of mercy towards the unsanctified (though at infinite expense he has put life within their reach, and exhausted arguments to persuade them to live), you annihilate the whole expression of benevolence made in the pure treatment of agents, and cover up one of the departments in which God has chosen to manifest himself.

By denying to the Moral Governor such a benevolent aim, and confounding his designs with those of the sovereign efficient cause, you would spread confusion through every part of the divine administration, and bring upon God and the language he employs, charges which I tremble to name. You might construct propositions upon this principle which would amount to impeachment and blasphemy, and impute to God a character more baleful and disastrous than that of Satan. In this way you would denounce one half of his administration as a farce. You would contradict the sincerity of his offers to the non-elect, and even bring upon him the horrid charge of making them to be damned. The sovereign efficient cause, it is admitted, had no thought of mercy towards them, no purpose to answer by them in the world; and if the Moral Governor is not allowed to have any benevolent designs concerning them, for what purpose were they created? No one has any thing to do with them in a way of favor; were they made solely to be damned? And as to the insincerity of the offer, you present God as saying, "Turn ye, for why will ye die?" and "O that they were wise!" while in no character has he any thought or desire of mercy towards them. But separate the Moral Governor from the sovereign efficient cause, and allow him to express his benevolence in that independent character in which he has nothing to employ but motives, and all is plain.

I dare not, therefore, say of God unqualifiedly, that he had no purpose of mercy towards the non-elect. Such language, I am persuaded, conveys wrong ideas of him, and contradicts that expression of benevolence which the measures of his government were intended to make.

All those measures which are calculated to promote the happiness of creatures indiscriminately, ought to be spoken of as having such an aim, except in relation to those whom the Moral Governor himself has publicly sentenced to judicial blindness or shut up in hell. Of the former class we have a right to say, that he bears long with them on

purpose "to show his wrath and make his power known," in their more aggravated destruction. Rom. 9 : 22, with Isa. 6 : 10. But to impute to God such a design in sending the gospel to men merely because they are non-elect, would be a dangerous falsehood, calculated to hide one half of the exhibitions which he makes of himself in the gospel. Our brethren reason as though all the non-elect were given over to judicial blindness ; whereas this abandonment is the act of the Moral Governor, who himself, so to speak, knows not a non-elect person on earth.

And now, to show you what has called for these remarks, I present the following. "Can it be said with reason that Christ when he hung on the cross poured out his life and his soul for those whom he never intended to save? Here Arminians, and even Lutherans and Baxterians, have a subterfuge. They say it was the will of God to save all men. But those with whom we now contend, agree that his purpose was to save the elect only, and they reject the distinction of antecedent and consequent will ; and, therefore, to them there is no evasion.—If he died for those whom he had no intention to save, it is incumbent on those who maintain the opinion to point out for what end. No wise agent performs an important work without having an important end in view. Let them tell us, then, what was the end of Christ in dying for those whom he had no intention of saving."

The writer was not sufficiently acquainted with the opinions of those with whom he had to "contend." We do not indeed say of God in his whole character, that it was his purpose to save all men. Neither do we explain any difficulties by resorting to an antecedent and consequent will. We admit that the sovereign efficient cause absolutely decreed the characters of men, so far as whether he would make them holy, or leave them to themselves. But we think that all these difficulties, which have perplexed the church in consequence of viewing God in a single character, may easily be solved by contemplating him in two. While we do not say of the sovereign efficient cause that he suspended any thing on the conduct of men, or had the least reference to that conduct in one of his decisions (because his decrees and acts terminate upon men as purely passive) ; we scruple not to attribute to the Moral Governor all the aims which the measures of his government are calculated to accomplish. We readily yield to the sovereign efficient cause every thing that the highest Calvinist ever did, and none the less ascribe to the Moral Governor every thing as relates to the present subject that an Arminian ever did. In particular we find no difficulty in saying of the Ruler of agents, that he wills the salvation of all to whom the gospel is sent. And we understand Peter and Paul as speaking of God in the same character, and meaning the same thing, when they say of him that he

“will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;” “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 1 Tim. 2: 4. 2 Pet. 3: 9. We dare not, therefore, say of him who provided the atonement (for that was the Moral Governor alone), that he had no intention to benefit the non-elect, nor do we generally speak of him as even knowing such a class of men.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUAL AGENTS INTENDED TO INFLUENCE AGENTS GENERALLY.

THE question often arises, why all this labor and expense to exert upon creatures the dominion of motives, when without motives God could sway them by his power as he pleases? But without motives he could not sway them to rational action, nor furnish them with rational enjoyment. He could not sway them to any action, nor furnish them with any enjoyment. The maniac, the beast, the worm, is governed by motives. The moment you pass the empire of motives, you are among insensible objects. The sway of which you speak must be supported by impressions on insensitive machines. There is no way to secure holy order and happiness but by motives fitted to awaken the best affections and the purest joy. Sanctifying power without these would produce no more than it did on the infant Jeremiah and John. While you speak of a sway by main strength without motives, what sense in talking of the anarchy which would have resulted from giving up the law by pardoning without an atonement? What need of an atonement or a law when motives are no longer needed? The only benefit of either is in the motives which they present.

To fill the universe with motives, then, is the great point. The more those which prompt to love, obedience, gratitude, joy, and praise, are spread, the richer and happier the universe is. A God of benevolence could not, therefore, but wish to bring forth all those motives which his own infinite perfection could furnish, all that could appear from a full exposition of the reasonableness of his claims and his unmingled benevolence, all that could appeal to the reason, the conscience, the hopes, the fears, or the ingenuousness of creatures.

This is the end for which all the manifestations of God have been made. If he exerts authority, it is to furnish motives to creatures. If he instructs, invites, promises, or threatens, it is with no other view.

Whatever direct end any measure may have, its ultimate end is this. God glorified is the universe filled with motives drawn from himself and prompting creatures to love, joy, and praise.

Now these motives are chiefly derived from the pure treatment of moral agents. By reverting to the chapter on a moral government, it will be seen how vast a proportion of the divine manifestations are made in this separate department.

The treatment of agents by itself is therefore a system of incalculable importance. That general treatment which is bottomed on their capacity, and would have no meaning without it; which assumes at every step that they have natural ability to act without the Spirit, and is in truth the same as though they were independent; which comprehends all the instructions given, all the authority employed, all the obligations imposed, all the motives presented, all the provisions made, all the invitations offered, all the long-suffering exercised, all the guilt charged, all the rewards conferred; this system, separate from the sovereign operations of the Spirit, is of immeasurable importance. Laying out of account the direct ends which the measures are calculated to accomplish, the system as a whole is of unspeakable importance as a mere source of motives.

Considered in this light, and not barely as expressive of direct benevolence towards the objects concerned, the system is one which God has been at infinite expense to perfect. If to give machines a right direction by blind impressions was enough, and it was not important to support the dominion of motives over the reason and conscience of creatures (an empire altogether distinct from the exertions of sovereign power upon the mind), why the penalty of the law? and why the infinite expense incurred on Calvary and in hell?

But it must never be supposed that the Moral Governor intends to draw motives from measures which hold out a false show. It is because they are what they profess to be, that they are real exhibitions of God and fitted to influence creatures.

Thus we find the Moral Governor pursuing a system of measures unfeignedly expressive of benevolence towards all whom they are adapted to serve, and entitled to be spoken of as aimed at their good. And this he does not only with a direct view to the immediate end which the measures are calculated to accomplish (at least in human language it must be so expressed), but for the purpose of sending out motives to affect moral agents generally. It is with this emission of motives that we are now concerned.

Here we must fasten our eyes on the Moral Governor alone, and think and speak of him as presenting the motives in every instance from direct

benevolence to the person concerned, and with a sincere aim at his good (as the thing must be expressed in human language), except in reference to those whom he himself has already given over to judicial blindness or to punishment. The array of motives is as directly calculated for the happiness of all to whom they are professedly addressed, as the "rain from heaven and fruitful seasons." The latter may be abused, and so may the former. But while creatures have a capacity to improve the blessing, it is certainly calculated for their good, and ought to be spoken of as aimed at their happiness. Any thing analogous to this between man and man would be called seeking the happiness of those concerned: and it would be so called in the government of God, were it not for his foreknowledge and control over the mind: and if other truths are not concealed, it may be so called without conveying any false idea of him: and it is so called by "Lutherans and Baxterians," and by the Bible itself; and ought to be so called, because it is in fact as expressive of direct benevolence as what is so denominated among men, and because there is no other way of familiarly expressing this great truth.

We must not, therefore, say of the measures of mercy which relate to the unsanctified, that they are intended to furnish motives for the benefit of elect men and angels only, but for the everlasting benefit of the persons concerned, and of all other moral agents through the universe, except those who are already given over to judicial blindness or to punishment. In these matters the Moral Governor knows no creature as elect or non-elect. His subjects lie before him in three classes; as those who are on probation and unabandoned, as those who are confirmed in holiness and happiness by way of reward, and as those who are sealed or delivered over to punishment. To say in relation to the first class, that the benevolent aim is confined to a part, is to say that their happiness is sought by an insincere treatment of the rest.

Now, then, to apply all this to the atonement. The ultimate design of the mediation of Christ was to fill the universe with motives, by bringing out to view the secrets of the Eternal Mind. He came to be "the image of the invisible God," "the face" in which he should be seen, "the word" by which he should be expressed. John 1: 1. 2 Cor. 4: 4, 6. Col. 1: 15.

But the direct end of the atonement, as related to the discoveries of God, was not to reveal the sovereign efficient cause, but to bring out to view the glories of the Moral Governor. The whole ground of the design lay among the relations subsisting between him and moral agents. It was the difficulties which arose in the favorable treatment of them which gave rise to the august mechanism of the whole plan; and the change wrought in their relations constituted the whole of the wonderful

result. The exhibition to be made of God by the direct operation of this great measure was in his relations to moral agents and in his treatment of them. This end had no dependence on the sovereign acts of the Spirit.

By such a provision for a sinning agent the Moral Governor intended to furnish motives for the everlasting benefit of that individual, and of all other rational creatures not already given over to destruction. It would be a great mistake, therefore, to suppose that the end of an atonement for Peter was limited to the pardon of Peter. Even as Peter himself was concerned, it had the further design to affect him for ever as an exhibition both of awful firmness in supporting the law and of amazing mercy. He was still to remain under moral government and the control of motives. His happiness was not to consist in a release from the restraints of law, but in living under the dominion of the everlasting King, in seeing all his rights secured, in contemplating his astonishing grace, and in being urged by competent motives to unceasing love, obedience, and praise.

But the atonement for Peter had a further end. It was intended (according to the dialect which it is necessary to use), favorably and eternally to affect all other moral agents not already given over to destruction. The fundamental principle in which lay the necessity of an atonement was, that not even the elect could be pardoned unless the whole universe were made to see that the law was not to be given up. This conviction must be spread, that God might still by sufficient motives support his empire over the rational creation; and that empire he wished still further to strengthen by vast discoveries of his grace. As Ruler of the whole universe, perhaps of more worlds than there are dusts in this, and looking forward to an eternal reign, he did not limit his view to the deliverance of a part of Adam's race. When that was done he had just begun his course. He wished to hold out the unchangeable authority of his law, and the infinite benignity of his government, to affect the intelligent universe to eternity.

CHAPTER XV.

REASONS FOR AN ATONEMENT FOR THOSE WHO PERISH.

THERE is a loud call made upon us for these reasons. Were we at all straitened for an answer, we might silence the demand by asking, what reasons for the offer to those who perish? This, you say, is made that God "may do what is agreeable to his own most holy nature, and

that it may be made fully to appear how great is the malignity and obstinacy of those whom he punishes." Had we no other reason to give for the provision on which the offer is founded, you ought not to complain.

But really there was no chance for a limited and absolute atonement, without consequences at which we shall all revolt. If the whole provision was made in that open and visible manner which was necessary to give it an operation upon public law, there was no way of limiting it but by calling a part of the race by name. This is not all. If it was provided for moral agents, it was not provided for creatures viewed as related to regeneration, for this change is wrought upon passive receivers. By the capacity which moral agents possess, they have in themselves, without the Spirit, a complete foundation for all the treatment which might be rendered to independent beings, and no less a foundation for merciful than for punitive treatment. Being thus complete entities in themselves, as distinguished from the passive character, God, if he acts according to truth, will shape and carry forward the measures which relate to them, without noticing in his outward dispensation the other character. If, then, in providing an atonement, he must have called a part by name, he must have said to Saul of Tarsus, without any reference to his regeneration, for you, bloody as you are, this atonement is absolutely provided, and do what you will you shall never be punished. Not a word about his repenting or believing, for that would have been a conditional atonement. And to Simon Magus he must have said, There is no atonement for you; and should you repent, and believe in an atonement for others, still you cannot be pardoned. A limited and absolute atonement publicly provided for moral agents must have divided the race in this way. To the non-elect it would have been the same as to the damned, and to the elect a prostration of all moral government.

But all this is not giving the reasons. There is no difficulty, however, in doing this, provided God can express his benevolence in the treatment of agents by itself, and we are allowed to ascribe to the Moral Governor, without reference to the sovereign efficient cause, a benevolent design. This is really the dialect in which we ought to speak of the subject, and the only one which does justice to the God of love.

In this dialect, then, I shall name two ends, the one immediate and the other ultimate. The immediate end was the pardon of all indiscriminately to whom the gospel was to be sent; the ultimate end was to manifest divine grace in this merciful and sincere treatment of a world, and thus to fill the universe with motives for the eternal benefit of all rational creatures not already given over to destruction.

(1) The immediate end. In this dialect, in which elect and non-elect are unknown, we must give the same reason for an atonement for Simon Magus as for Peter, to wit, a direct regard to his deliverance from the curse. To neither was it an expression of electing love (for election lay in another department), but only of that common benevolence which God feels towards all his creatures. There was in this thing as complete an exercise and expression (for the latter without the former would have been feigned) of common benevolence to Simon Magus, as there is of maternal feeling where a mother runs to catch a falling infant. There was a difference as to the expected result, because God was omniscient. But his benevolence for Simon was as real as the affection of the mother, and this was as natural and unerring a way to express the one as her haste the other. At least, he has warned the universe to consider his merciful treatment of the wicked as the organ by which his benevolence is expressed. No language which is adapted to our finite minds can completely express the Infinite: but in such imperfect language as we possess we must say, if we would express the truth to common apprehensions, that the Moral Governor willed not that Simon "should perish, but that" he "should come to repentance." Tell me, then, why the mother ran to catch her falling infant, and I will tell you, in language consecrated by the Holy Ghost, why God provided an atonement for Simon.

Some are for limiting the end of this provision to the ultimate end. But this is saying that the universe were to be instructed and affected by an insincere show of mercy to Simon. This merciful treatment was no more exclusively designed to send out motives to others, than the punitive treatment which he received. Both were intended for this end ultimately, but both had an end which immediately respected the subject. There was in him as perfect a foundation to support the privilege of an atonement, as to sustain a punishment for rejecting it. His capacity made it as proper for God to provide the privilege for him (just as though he was likely to use it without the Spirit), as for God to punish him for not using it. The mercy, then, no less than the punishment, may be contemplated as lying between God and Simon, and as being expressive of the divine character in its direct aspect upon him.

(2) The ultimate end. This was to exhibit God and fill the universe with motives, benevolently intended to affect Simon and all other rational creatures not already given over to destruction.

As the authority of the law was concerned, we have already seen the necessity of a general provision, as without prostrating the law it was impossible to divide the inhabitants of the same world. And as the

honor of mercy was respected, a provision for the whole would manifestly do more than a provision for a part. The highest exhibition of this attribute that could be made in the pure treatment of agents was here to be brought forth. Over this entire world the Moral Governor wished to extend the sceptre of his grace, and to send out hence a report which should fill other worlds with motives to love and praise him to eternity. The universe itself was to feel the effects of Calvary for ever.

And now, if you ask what was gained by this general provision, my answer is, it gave that glorious Sovereign who fills the public throne of the universe, not the cabinet of private decrees, who governs his subjects by motives, not by mechanical force, whose business during a state of probation is to express their duties, not their destinies, to provide privileges, not to constrain their acceptance; it gave him an opportunity to come out to this entire world with his renovated law, with new favors in his hands, with new claims to the homage and gratitude of men, with new splendors around his throne, with a sceptre dipt in blood, sure to bring more glory to himself, more confusion to his enemies, and more good to the universe. It gave him a chance to add one proof of his inflexible adherence to his law which no other circumstance could furnish, a practical declaration that transgressors should not escape, though his own Son had died for them. It gave him on whom devolves the task of punishing the wicked an opportunity to prove that he does not delight in their misery, to acquit himself in a double sense of their blood, and to make this appeal through heaven, earth, and hell, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" It gave him a chance to come into contact with subjects in a new relation, and such a relation as subjects will never again sustain to eternity, — that of creatures wading to perdition through the blood of Christ expressly shed for their redemption, and a compassionate Sovereign standing over them and urging and beseeching them to live. This exhibition of character, both human and divine, will bring an inconceivable amount of additional lustre to a throne of mercy, as well as to a tribunal of justice.

The establishment of this more benignant and glorious empire over a world of moral agents became the personal interest of Christ, as the universal government, and this part among the rest, belonged to his stipulated reward. From the form of the dominion as it appears in his hands, we know that this part was included in the covenant. Besides a power to quicken whom he will, he holds a beneficent empire over a world of moral agents, founding his claims on their capacity, and treating them indiscriminately as under a dispensation of grace. Had we no other evidence of this, the second and third chapters of Revelation would furnish

enough. As surely, then, as he was influenced by "the joy that was set before him," the erection of this dominion was one of the motives which urged him to the cross.

We must not, therefore, suppose that the salvation of the elect was the sole reward or motive of Christ. This new relation of a world of moral agents, and the administration of a benign government over the whole, are two items which must be added to the account.

But does this addition diminish the believer's comfort? It is so said. "This doctrine of a general atonement takes away from the true believer one of the most interesting and edifying views of this event which can be presented to him. When he contemplates the death of Christ, he beholds the most striking and affecting manifestation of the peculiar love of God to him. But if the atonement be as much for those who are reprobates as for him, how is it an evidence of any great or special love? It is no ground of consolation to know that Christ loved me and gave himself for me, because the reprobate may know the same." Perpetually confounding the atonement with the higher ransom. We acknowledge that Christ "gave himself" in a peculiar sense for the elect, and obtained their salvation as the reward of that active virtue. And there is on our plan undiminished reason for all those grateful and triumphant feelings which an Owen was so zealous to cherish. But is the death of Christ "no consolation" to me because he atoned for others? Am I so bent on monopolizing the whole influence to myself? And is it "no consolation" that he has thrown around his Father's sceptre a splendor of mercy which sends its radiance even to the gates of hell?

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EXTENT OF THE PROVISION NOT INCIDENTAL, BUT PURPOSELY INTENDED.

SOME have said that the influence of the atonement upon the non-elect was merely casual, and arose from their living in the same world, and under the same law, and possessing the same nature with the elect, and the same world and nature in which Christ suffered, and the same law under which he lived, and from the necessary sufficiency of his merit, resulting from his infinite dignity and worth. But by whatever means the atonement acquired this influence, certain it is that it was the determinate purpose of God that it should possess it, not because it could not be avoided, but to express his unfeigned benevolence, and to answer the important ends of a moral government.

We say that God designed the atonement for all. What do we mean? Not that he intended to make all partakers of the benefit by an operation upon them as passive; but that he designed by its influence so to change their relations as moral agents, that should they hear the gospel and believe, he could pardon them all without injuring the law, and that a foundation should thus be laid for a fair and reasonable offer and promise and command to all; and, furthermore, that he intended to send the gospel into the world, which but for the depravity of men would spread like lightning to the utmost bounds of the earth; and that he determined to force its way to millions who would never be sanctified, and thus to place in their hands a means of pardon which they should be under obligations to improve for their everlasting good. That all who hear the gospel have the benefit so within their reach that they could make it their own by doing their duty, and are bound to make it their own, I shall now assume. The question then is, whether God determined it should be so, — whether as Moral Governor he had any purpose to answer by putting the privilege into the hands of those who were never to be sanctified, or whether he did it incidentally through their relation to the common world, the common nature, and common law. We say he had important purposes to answer, and did it with fixed design, to gratify his benevolence, and to accomplish the same ends that are attained by other measures of a moral government. And we allege that the fact of his having done it affords the same evidence of a settled purpose, that the existence of creatures does of a previous design to create.

It ought not to escape attention, that the privilege is fastened upon them by a law commanding them to believe; for without the command it would not be a privilege in the estimation of a moral government, as it would not be a means of happiness which they would be under obligations to improve for their good. The question then is, whether that law was given them incidentally, — whether the privilege was thus authoritatively thrust into their hands, not with fixed design to answer the purposes of a moral government, but casually, through their connection with the common world, the common nature, and common law. How will this matter appear at the judgment of the great day? When they shall be arraigned one by one, and punished severally for rejecting the privilege, will it then seem that the talent was not intentionally committed to them as their Lord's servants, but casually fell upon them as they stood in the crowd? By the same rule you might say that all other laws and mercies come to them casually, and that the Moral Governor had no end at all to answer by them in a way of favor, but only found them in his way as he came to treat with others. But besides that this would cut off every act of God from being an expression of benevolence towards them (as a favor

done by accident is no indication of love), I would ask, how came they in existence? and for what end were they created? Were they incidentally made? or were they brought into existence for the sole purpose of being damned? As sovereign efficient cause, it is agreed, God had no favor for them or purpose to answer by them: and if, as Moral Governor, he had no privilege to put into their hands, as an expression of love, and to answer the ends of government, but only found them in his way as he came to bless others, I ask, who placed them there? and for what end? In no character has God any favor for them; were they created solely to be damned?

If you admit with the church at large, that the atonement was expressive of benevolence to the non-elect, you must no longer say that the privilege was not intended for them, for that would be bringing words against each other in a flat contradiction. Those who have chosen to ascribe its influence upon this part of the race to its sufficiency, have still generally allowed that its bearing upon them was according to God's determinate counsel, and indicative of benevolence. This, as we shall see in another place, was the concession of the Synod of Dort, and even of those members who had the most contracted views of the subject.

CHAPTER XVII.

REPROBATION AND THE ORDER OF DIVINE DECREES.

IN an argument intended to prove that God had no motive to provide an atonement for the non-elect, because he had no regard for them even as creatures, but "hated" them, a respectable writer proceeds as follows: "Some hope to get over the difficulty by placing the decree of redemption before the decree of election. They conceive that God first determined to give his Son a ransom for the whole human race, and then, foreseeing that none would accept the offer if left to themselves, he elected a certain number, on whom he determined to bestow the gift of faith. To this theory I object the following things. (1) That there is no succession in the divine decrees, but God wills all things by one most comprehensive and perfect purpose. (2) Admitting an order in the divine decrees, this order is preposterous; because it supposes God to determine upon a most important and costly means before he had proposed any particular end to be accomplished by it. Or if he designed the salvation of the whole world in giving Christ a ransom for them, his purpose was not accomplished. (3) It furnishes no sufficient motive to produce such a

grand event. (4) Or if it be alleged that the love which was so exceedingly great had all men for its object, why, after doing so much for their salvation, did it become ineffective, and leave so many of them to perish forever?—How can the reprobation of a part be reconciled with love so great?”

It is agreed on all hands, that there is no order of time in the divine mind; but whether there is not in the divine decrees what is called the order of nature is another question. It either is so or it is not. Let us suppose that it is not. Then it was the “comprehensive purpose” of God to do just as he has done,—to save the elect from sin and death through a Mediator, and to send the non-elect to hell for rejecting a Mediator provided for them as moral agents. And what is gained by this resort? Let us now take the other supposition, viz., that there is an order of nature in the divine decrees. And here I will pause to show that this is certainly the case. First, there is an order in things. Holiness in creatures is before reward, sin is before punishment, ruin is before the work of a Redeemer. Secondly, there is order in the divine acts. God imparts holiness before he rewards; he suffers men to sin before he punishes or pardons; he left man to fall before he sent a Redeemer. If the acts did not follow each other in this order they would not be suitable, and some of them would not be just. On the scale of creatures they succeed each other in the order of time; and even to God they must follow each other in the order of nature, or they would not appear to him suitable and just. Thirdly, if the acts of God, even as contemplated by himself, follow each other in the order of nature, so must his purposes. These must take the same order or they would not be wise, and some of them would not be just. His purpose to make men holy is in the order of nature before his purpose to reward; his purpose to leave man to fall is in the same order before his design to punish or pardon, or to provide a Saviour.

There is one thing more to be settled before I draw the conclusion. God’s decrees concerning moral agents must be distinguished from his decrees about passive recipients. We have seen that the purposes of the Moral Governor and those of the sovereign efficient cause must not be confounded. Now whether the decree of the sovereign efficient cause about abandoning the non-elect was before or after the decree respecting the fall of man or the atonement, it is not at all necessary to inquire. Allowing it to have been before both, and the non-elect as passive recipients to have been abandoned by a purpose prior to all others, yet as moral agents they still had in them a foundation to support the privilege of an atonement. These two characters both in God and man are so independent of each other, that a decree of the sovereign efficient cause

about the passive could not prevent the Moral Governor from proceeding to provide a privilege for the same creatures as moral agents, nor from expressing in that provision the unfeigned benevolence of the divine mind. Now when we inquire about the order of decrees on such a subject as this, we must confine ourselves to the decrees of the Moral Governor; and a decree of the Moral Governor about making a creature miserable is only a decree about his punishment. The question then is, whether the Moral Governor decreed to punish men for rejecting a Saviour before he decreed to provide a Saviour. The question answers itself. The Moral Governor had nothing to do with men as elect and non-elect, but merely as moral agents, and in reference to his final treatment of them as believers and unbelievers. And his decree to punish any for rejecting a Saviour must be founded on his foreknowledge that they would thus reject. This was all the decree that the Moral Governor could pass respecting the misery of those who were to hear the gospel.

This distinction between the two characters of God, founded on the two independent characters of men, would have prevented all the disputes between the Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians. The former, had not the two characters been confounded, could not have held that the non-elect were created merely to glorify justice. The rights of justice belong to the Moral Governor, whose motives are to be separated from every question relative to regeneration, and who must be considered as directly aiming at the happiness of those whom his measures are calculated to serve.

The principal mistake of the above extract lies in supposing that the merciful treatment of agents by itself was no object or motive with God, and no expression or dictate of benevolence. Allow this to have been an object with him, and there was motive enough to induce him to provide a privilege for those as agents whom as passive he had abandoned. Allow this to be a dictate and expression of benevolence, and a provision for agents could be prompted by philanthropy without being accompanied by electing love. If the Moral Governor chose to express the general benevolence of the divine mind towards certain objects, it did not follow that the sovereign efficient cause must sanctify them.

It is of no consequence, therefore, whether the decree of election or that respecting the atonement had the priority, because they were decrees of God in two distinct and independent characters.

The fact, however, appears to be, that the decree of the sovereign efficient cause respecting a division of character (which was in reality the decree of election and non-election) was subsequent in the order of nature to his decree respecting the fall of man, and to the decree of the

Moral Governor respecting the atonement. No distinction was decreed in the character of men in relation to the fall: all fell. The division of character was ordained to be subsequent to this, and subsequent, as I shall now show, to the provision of a Saviour. When men were all fallen, and doomed to the curse of eternal abandonment, not one of them could receive the Spirit but through a Mediator. Not one of them, therefore, could be elected to "be holy" (Eph. 1: 4) until a Saviour was decreed. Accordingly, the earliest account which we have of election is, that the objects were chosen *in* Christ: "Chosen—in him before the foundation of the world;—predestinated—unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ." God hath "called us with a holy calling,—according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus." "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the First-born among many brethren." Rom. 8: 29. Eph. 1: 4, 5. 3: 11. 2 Tim. 1: 9.

This order in God's decrees, however, does not imply that he had not before him the whole plan anterior to the commencement of the order, or that he decided one part without reference to another. For instance, he saw that he could glorify his justice in punishment, and his grace in the work of redemption, before he decreed to suffer the fall of man, and he passed this decree with his eye fixed on the measures which he might subsequently adopt. And yet he could not absolutely decree to punish or to pardon till he had first determined to permit sin.

The order, then, seems to have been this. The sovereign efficient cause resolved to permit the fall of man: the Moral Governor next decreed a provision for the whole human race: the sovereign efficient cause then decided how many on the one hand he would incline to believe, and on the other, not how many he would make sinners, but how many creatures who had forfeited every divine influence he would let alone.

This being what we consider the fact, we are not pleased with the term *reprobate*, because it seems to imply that some were excluded from a chance of salvation by the limited provision of the Moral Governor, if not from holiness by the positive act of the sovereign efficient cause. We prefer the term *non-elect*, because this leaves it to be supposed, that, after being provided for, they were left to themselves.

CHAPTER XVIII.

COVENANT OF REDEMPTION.

WE have discovered that "the joy — set before" the Redeemer consisted of three parts, the establishment of a new relation for a world of moral agents, an absolute salvation for the elect, and the administration of the government of the universe. These, then, were the three parts of the reward promised him in the covenant of redemption.

From whichever person the first proposition is conceived to have come, the surrender and accord of the Son must have been substantially as follows. From regard to thy law and the human race, I will become incarnate and die, to place salvation within the reach of all who hear the gospel; and in return I ask for them a state of probation and a general offer of mercy. This I am willing to grant them because I love them all, and wish to manifest this love to the universe. But as they will not bow unless subdued, I claim a right to sanctify a certain number. I expect also the government of the universe, that I may display thy glory in the merciful treatment of a world of moral agents, and in the salvation of my elect. These three parts are my reward.

This is altogether different from the offering of the pearl as an absolute price for a part, and in no sense for the rest. It is offering nothing. It is only agreeing to offer, and stipulating about the reward. The distinction between this private covenant and the public transaction which constituted the whole atonement may be illustrated thus. A regiment revolts. The colonel publicly offers to die for the mutineers, not to shield them in rebellion, not to save them from punishment whether they return to duty or not, but to give them an opportunity to return and live. This privilege is obtained for the whole regiment, but extends no further. For though the life of the officer was worth that of all the men in ten revolted regiments, and might have answered for them all if expressly offered for so many, yet as it was not, its influence was limited to one. This was all that constituted atonement in the case.

Now upon this transaction ingraft another. Suppose the general has power to change the hearts of the rebels. To gratify the benevolence of the generous victim, he secretly engages to bring one half to accept the offered pardon. This was an essential part of the motive which induced the substitute to die. Sincere benevolence to the whole, and a wish to support a vigorous and benign government, were other parts. But if it be asked for whom atonement was made, the answer is, for the whole revolted regiment.

CHAPTER XIX.

OUR WHOLE MEANING AT ONE VIEW.

WHAT do we mean by *for* when we say that the atonement was for all? Not that it was for them considered merely as sentient; in other words, not that it was the secret purpose of God to make them all happy by the provision through an operation on them as passive; but that it was for all as moral agents. When we say that it was for all as moral agents, we mean four things. (1) That in its actual influence it changed the relations which all as moral agents sustained to the divine law. (2) That it thus became, in relation to all who hear the gospel, a provision for moral agents, and a real privilege. (3) That the provision and privilege were purposely intended for all. (4) That the atonement was expressly offered for all.

(1) In its actual influence it changed the relations which all as moral agents sustained to the divine law. It removed the curse of abandonment which all as agents had incurred, and it rendered their pardon consistent with the honor of the law on supposition that they should hear the gospel and believe. It was this change of relation which laid the foundation for a fair offer of pardon to all, and for a reasonable command to all to make the benefit their own.*

(2) By this means the atonement became, in relation to all who hear the gospel, a provision for moral agents. The whole benefit is offered to them, and as far as can be done before they have performed their part, is actually made over to them by covenant, and they are commanded to receive it. This done, it is a complete provision for them as moral agents. It places pardon so within their reach that they can possess it by only doing their duty, no natural impossibility lying in the way, and nothing but a bad temper, for which they are wholly to blame. Just as the provision now is, and not as it would have been had it been foreseen that they would believe, they are capable of living by it if well disposed, and are bound to live by it, and cannot lose it without wick-

* This explanation shows how wide from the mark the objection is which is derived from the nations who never heard the gospel. Because the relations of all men were thus changed, it did not follow that the gospel must be preached to all. Much like this is the objection, that when Christ died many were in hell. So when he died many were in heaven; and according to this objection he could not atone for them, nor was their salvation founded on his death. But the fact is, that he virtually died the day that Adam fell, and every thing proceeded as though this had actually been the case.

edly throwing it away. And it is charged against them in the accounts of a moral government as an atonement for them ; and those who fail to make it finally their own will be eternally punished for that greatest of all sins. Thus they are brought into a salvable state, and fairly put upon probation.

Now this is all that can be meant by its being a provision for moral agents. If more is meant it respects men, not as agents, but as passive recipients. If I say that sanctification was provided for men, I speak of a provision for them as passive. If I say that absolute salvation was provided for the elect, I speak of something prepared for them as agents, and something procured for them as recipients. But if I speak of a mere provision for agents, I mean a provision which is to benefit them upon their acting the part of agents towards it, and the effect of which is suspended on their own conduct. A provision for moral agents as such, cannot be otherwise than conditional in this sense.

Now a provision which thus affects all men may be said to be for all, in the same sense as a law is for those who refuse to obey it, or as Bibles and Sabbaths are for those who abuse them, or as an estate is for a prodigal son who forfeits or squanders the inheritance. It gives all a fair chance to live ; a fair chance being where a blessing is so brought within the reach of an agent that he can enjoy it by doing his duty. It is to all a complete privilege ; privileges being only means of happiness, which men are under obligations to improve for their good. The privilege of an atonement is as completely brought to all, as any advantage was ever brought to a man which he wickedly threw away. It is as perfectly in their hands as any privilege was ever in the hands of a man which he failed to improve. The whole advantage of an atonement, as far as depends on God, is as much in the hands of one as another, bating the single circumstance of the gift of faith ; and that has nothing to do with the subject, for we are speaking of men, not as recipients of faith, but as creatures bound to believe. It could not have been for them as moral agents in a higher sense ; for if a higher sense is added, it respects them, not as agents, but as passive receivers, or at most as sentient.

(3) This influence upon all was not incidental, but purposely intended. It was the deliberate design of the Moral Governor to put the privilege into the hands of all, from the purest benevolence, and (as it must be expressed in the dialect of a moral government) with a sincere aim at their good, as well as to manifest his mercy to the universe.

(4) The great question remaining is, how came the atonement to have such an influence upon all ? Through its sufficiency, say our brethren : and some of them illustrate that sufficiency by the value of a pearl ex-

pressly not offered for a part. But we allege that it must have been expressly offered for all as moral agents to obtain such an influence. But when we say that it was expressly offered for all as moral agents, we allude solely to the purpose declared in the public instrument. We mean, that, in the public explanation accompanying the atonement, it was stated to be for the benefit of all as moral agents, that is, for the use of all indiscriminately who as agents would believe.

These four particulars comprehend our whole meaning, and, if admitted, plainly make out an atonement for all as moral agents.

And when we have gained this point, we take off all restraint and say plainly that it was for all; because in its proper influence it was for none but moral agents. It spent all its force upon their relations, and even to Paul was no more than a provision for a moral agent. And when we have made out that it was expressly offered for all in public, we throw away all qualifying terms, and say unlimitedly that it was expressly offered for all; because in private it was not offered for any. The secret covenant between the sacred persons merely regulated Christ's reward. It was not this, but the public explanation, which gave to his death that bearing upon public law which was necessary to render the elect themselves pardonable. In the latter, then, we must look for the express purpose. And when we turn our eye towards the public instrument, we find the sacrifice offered for none but moral agents, and for all indiscriminately, subject to a conditional application.

On the question whether the atonement was equally for all, and in what sense it was not; when we speak of the secret purpose and motive of the divine mind, and speak of man as a whole, we cannot say that it was as much intended for Simon Magus as for Paul. But when we would express the proper influence and tendency of the measure itself, we must speak of men as moral agents only, and then we must pronounce it as much for one as another. Its influence upon all was equal. It removed the curse of abandonment from Simon as much as from Paul, and rendered one as pardonable, on the supposition of his faith, as the other. And this is all that it did for either. As a privilege it was equally designed for both by the Moral Governor, and was, in itself considered, an equal expression of benevolence to both; and when we use the popular dialect of a moral government, we must say unqualifiedly that it was designed for both alike. And certainly in the express purpose, as it appears in the public instrument, there is no discrimination, no hint of any such distinction as elect and non-elect. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish." This is all we mean.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BOTTOM OF THE MISTAKE LIES IN OVERLOOKING HUMAN AGENCY.

IN all the views which our brethren take of the non-elect in relation to this question, they overlook their existence as moral agents, and affirm the same things of them as might be affirmed if they were passive blocks under the hands of the engraver. This is the principal source of the whole mistake. That it is so will appear from the following aspects of their system.

(1) When there is an atonement which is a complete provision for the non-elect as moral agents (one which changed their relations to the divine law, and placed pardon so within their reach that they can enjoy it only by doing their duty, and ought to make it their own, and are commanded to do it, and are punished for not doing it) ; still they say it was not for them, because it was not the purpose of God to dispose them to accept it by an operation on them as passive. This is entirely burying up the moral agent, and leaving nothing in the man for an atonement to respect when the receiver of impressions is taken away. Further, when there is an atonement which spent all its force on the relations of moral agents, and is nothing but a provision for men in that character, still they say it was not for this part of the race, though they allow that it affected them in every way in which it could affect mere moral agents. That which is nothing but a provision for moral agents, and is allowed to have been such to Simon Magus, was not for Simon Magus, because he was not constrained to accept it by an influence on him as passive. This is burying up his agency to purpose. Further, an atonement which was expressly offered in public for this part of the race as moral agents, was still not for them (though it bound them to live by it, and had thus all the attributes of a provision for them as moral agents), and we must go in search of some unknown offering made in secret for men in another character. Thus the pearl was not offered for the nine hundred, though it bound them to come out, and therefore, unless the bond was unjustly imposed, was a provision for them as moral agents, and, of course, must have been offered for them as such. If, in contemplating their rights as agents, the principle was fixed between the offerer and receiver that they should not be stopped if they attempted to come out, and this right was announced and made over to them by promise, then the pearl was offered and accepted for them as moral agents : and yet it was not offered for them, as though a moral agent amounted to nothing.

In some of the arguments on the other side it is even assumed that there is no such thing as a provision for moral agents. They reason thus : if God foresees that men will reject the provision he will not make it ; and if he makes it he will not suffer them to reject it. A prudent physician, say they, would not prepare a medicine for those who he foresaw would refuse it, nor suffer those for whom it was prepared to cast it away if he could alter their minds.* Then there is no such thing as a provision for moral agents. Or, rather, the very existence of moral agents is overlooked in such reasonings as this.

(2) It is a fundamental principle of the system, that men without the Spirit have no power to believe, that is, no capacity which can be called a natural ability. Then, indeed, without the Spirit they are not moral agents, for capacity, we have seen, is the very foundation of moral agency. Accordingly, some have the consistency to deny that there is in natural men a proper basis of obligation without resorting to Adam. In general, they will not admit the natural possibility of the non-elect's believing, nor even allow us to make the supposition of such an event. From not perceiving that their capacity is a full foundation for the provision of privileges, just as though it was certain they would improve them, and enough to justify the expression that they can improve them, they are unable to see that the non-elect bear any more relation to an atonement brought to their door and offered to them, than masses of inanimate matter ; and often ask, of what avail such a provision without the gift of faith ? Just as they would ask, of what avail a provision for the dead ? Of course, they will not allow that it gives them a fair chance to live, or is to them a complete privilege, though chances (thus actively considered) and privileges are predicable only of moral agents. Its being for them as moral agents is a fact of great magnitude and importance, but this is wholly sunk.

(3) They cannot see that the atonement expressed the least benevolence to the non-elect, any more than if it had suspended pardon on their possessing the intellect of a Locke or the strength of a Hercules. They do not see that the natural powers of men in such a case constitute a foundation for treatment by which benevolence can be expressed, no less than if pardon was suspended on their stretching out the hand. And this leads to the conclusion, that nothing which God can do for those who remain unsanctified, can indicate benevolence towards them. And the next step is to affirm, that he has no benevolence towards them, not even a "general affection to them as creatures." And then he could have no motive to make the provision for them, and it could not be designed for

* Delegates from Drent in the Synod of Dort. — *Acts of Synod*, Part III. p. 207.

them, but must have fallen out a provision for them in some incidental way, though fastened upon them severally as such by express law. In short, moral agents are such absolute non-entities, that God could have no motive to make a provision for them as such; and, therefore, to place the decree respecting the atonement before that of election is to charge him with resolving on a costly measure without a motive.

(4) This total sinking of moral agency appears in their placing a limited atonement on a level with non-election, both as to the possibility of pardon and the sincerity of the offer.

First, as to the possibility of pardon. In answer to the objection, "If Christ died not for me I cannot be saved, because there is no atonement for me," it is said, "Any objection of this sort — is more directly levelled at the doctrine of particular election, than at that of particular redemption." "The decree of election and reprobation most certainly fixes the event of the salvation or damnation of every individual of the human race. And what advantage is gained by supposing that Christ has made an atonement for those whose eternal destiny to destruction is immutably fixed? Wherein has this scheme the advantage over the one which we advocate?"

If men were blocks, a decree not to impart life to them would leave them in the same condition as a neglect to make a provision for their use on the supposition of their living. And if non-election placed men where a limited atonement would have done, it is because they are as powerless as blocks. No man for a moment could have supposed the two cases parallel without forgetting that the non-elect possess a capacity to believe. The certainty that they will perish is indeed the same on either plan; and so it is on the bare supposition of foreknowledge. But here lies the difference. Upon this scheme men are debarred independently of their own act; upon ours their own rejection of the gospel is the ground of their exclusion. On one supposition the acceptance of the benefit is a natural impossibility, because no benefit was provided for them; on the other, it is perfectly easy for them to live, if only well disposed. This difference could not have been overlooked had not the existence of creature agency been buried from view. And the existence of that makes all the difference between a righteous moral government and fate. That certainty which involves the spontaneity of creatures is consistent with freedom and the government of a just God; that certainty which is independent of their voluntary action is fate, as despotic as ever the Stoics feigned.

Secondly, as to the sincerity of the offer. "The same objection," it is said, "may be made to the sincerity of offering salvation to those whom God in the decree of election has passed by, as to those who are not in-

cluded in the decree of redemption." Nothing could render the offer insincere but a natural impossibility in the way of accepting it. This would; as the offer of escape to a prisoner on condition of his deciphering a scrawl which really had no meaning, would only be sporting with his misery. Insincerity placed in any thing else, would render all the offers of an omniscient God even to the elect insincere, unless simultaneously accompanied by an influence to constrain their acceptance. Now, if a decree to withhold the Spirit rendered it as naturally impossible for the non-elect to accept the offer as the want of an atonement would have done, it is because without the Spirit they are as powerless as statues. All that in creatures which supports the whole fabric of a moral government is entirely overlooked in such reasonings as this.

(5) The same thing appears in the confounding of elect and non-elect with believers and unbelievers, and all these with capable agents. The atonement was not for Simon Magus as a capable agent, because it was not for him as an unbeliever; and therefore he was excluded as non-elect; annihilating thus the capable agent, and making him as passive in his unbelief as in his non-election. If unbelief had been as essential to him and as passively received as complexion, this would have been right. For had the atonement not been offered for people of his color, you might have said with truth that it was not for Simon as a man, because it was not for a person of such a hue, and that therefore he was excluded as one predestined to that complexion. But to reason thus about his unbelief is to reduce him from an accountable being to a passive tablet, and the moral government over him to inexorable fate.

In like manner they make it the same thing for an atonement to be for Paul as a believer and for Paul as elect; and because they understand it to have been for him absolutely as elect, they say it was for him absolutely as a believer. But this, unless his own act in believing is reduced to nothing, is saying that it was for him absolutely on the condition of his faith. But they exclude the condition, and thereby reduce his own act to nothing. It might have been absolutely for one as a white man, because he has no agency in forming his own complexion; but to say that it was absolutely for Paul as a believer is to annihilate the moral agent, and leave nothing but the passive receiver of faith.

(6) The same thing appears in the opposition which is made to the dialect of a moral government, as savoring too much of legality for the reign of grace and the Spirit; though it is the only language in which the duties, rights, and relations of moral agents can be expressed. This may be exemplified in the mark of proscription set upon condition and probation. The things denoted by these terms, we have seen, must accompany moral agents, the one until they are fixed in happiness or

misery, the other as long as their existence remains; and nothing but the habit of burying from view this character of men seems sufficient to account for the opposition made to the terms. This cause comes out more fully in some of their reasonings about the things. "If he died for them only on some condition, then if that condition never takes place he did not die for them." What more could be said if they were stocks? On this principle nothing can be done for mere moral agents more than for clods, and their rational powers, separate from the Spirit, are no proper basis to support the measures of a moral government. Nothing can be done for a clod that is not done for it as passive, because it is nothing but passive. And this reasoning assumes, that nothing can be done for a man unless it is made effectual by an operation on him as passive; thus sinking his active nature altogether.

It is not difficult to see by what habits of thinking great and good men have fallen into this mistake. They have fixed their eyes so steadily on secret decrees and the passiveness of men, and pondered so much on faith as "the gift of God," and so little on faith as the duty and act of the creature, that they have lost sight of moral agents and a moral government. In particular, the idea of reprobation has so fastened itself upon their minds, that they have been unable to ascribe to God in any character a serious aim to provide the means of salvation for the non-elect. In this way they have lost those discoveries of divine benevolence which are made in the treatment of agents by itself. But let them turn their eye full upon the rational faculties of man, and familiarize to their minds the operations of God in that independent character in which he stands related to moral agents, and they will find a new world opened to their view, and will see that one very interesting part of the divine manifestations has been lost. And then they will easily admit the views of a moral government which their brethren entertain, without renouncing election and special grace, and will find nothing in a general atonement to weaken the security of believers or the special love of God to the elect. And if any thing is gained by these views, it is certain that nothing will be lost.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT LANGUAGE ON THE SUBJECT.

If the atonement was for all men as moral agents, it is proper to say unlimitedly that it was for all. Whatever is true of the moral agent,

may be affirmed unqualifiedly of the man. Whatever is predicable of a person either in his active or passive character, we affirm unlimitedly of that individual, leaving it to the predicate to determine whether it respects him as an agent or a recipient. Thus we say of the man, that he is under obligations, that he enjoys privileges, that he is good or bad, that he is entitled to reward or punishment; all which is true of him as an agent. Thus we say of the man that he was elected or not elected, that he has been regenerated or not regenerated; all which is true of him as a recipient. In like manner we say of a man that he is wise, of a woman that she is beautiful, of a house that it is white or that it is capacious; leaving it to be gathered from the predicates whether the former attributes belong to the body or mind, and whether the latter appertain to the covering or the interior of the building. If, then, the atonement is for all men as moral agents, it is proper to affirm without limitation that it is for all. And if it is right to assert unqualifiedly of men what is true of them as moral agents, it is proper to affirm unlimitedly of God what is true of him as Moral Governor, leaving it to the predicates to determine in what character they respect him. And this is the way in which he is spoken of throughout his word.

In this way we must speak, or depart from the established use of language, and either utter an implied falsehood, or fall into tautology. The atonement was a measure as exclusively adapted to agents as law itself. Try, then, the principle by the case of a law. We say unqualifiedly, that such a law was made for the people of the United States. That is correct. But if, in reference to their double character, we say that it was made for them in a certain sense, we utter an implied falsehood, for it was made for them as completely as a law could be made for any people. If we say it was made for them as agents, we use tautology (such as I have been obliged to use through this whole treatise), for no law can be made for men in any other character. But when a law or an atonement is made for men as agents, to say unqualifiedly that it was not made for them, because they are not prevented from abusing it by another power operating upon them as passive, is something more than an implied falsehood, it is expressly untrue. The same when we speak of the design of God. To say that he did not design his law for Ahab, because he did not intend by sanctifying influence to render it an ultimate blessing to him, is manifestly false. And it is the same when we say that he did not design the atonement for Ananias and Sapphira.

That language should be employed which expresses the truth on the subject. If God has provided an atonement for all, we ought to say so,

that he may have the glory, and that men may know their privileges and their hopes.

So far as the dispute is verbal, a phraseology ought not to be adhered to which does not express the truth. And how far it is verbal is a question of some importance. Now our brethren in detail admit all that we ask. This they do as often as they say that Christ died "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish;" and as often as they allow that all may enjoy the benefit by believing, and are bound to make it their own. And yet when they come to general propositions, they contradict the one which we support, and distinctly say that the atonement was not for all. This is because they do not attach to the general proposition the same meaning that we do. And the reason of this is, they are not agreed with us as to the character in which men are to be spoken of in this matter. We contend that they ought to be spoken of as moral agents; they speak of them continually as passive receivers. In general, they do not mean to deny what really is meant by the atonement's being for all as moral agents, but they so annihilate agents as to make no account of this. When, therefore, we say that it was for Simon Magus (meaning that it was for him as a capable agent), they, though they allow what we mean, refuse to use our language, and say decidedly that it was not for him, because they overlook his agency, and speak of him as merely sentient and passive. The proposition that it was for him has a different meaning with them from what it has with us, because they see him not as an agent. And if they could see him as an agent, so as to attach the same meaning to the proposition that we do, they would not deny it. So far the dispute is verbal. But the mistake lies deeper than words, and consists in overlooking the natural ability of man. This is the bottom of the difficulty. Though therefore there is much logomachy in the contest, yet if we are right our brethren labor under a real mistake. On a subject where they ought to speak of men exclusively as moral agents, they constantly reason about them as though they were passive tablets, no more capable of believing than the clods of the valley. And when they refer to the purpose of God in this provision, they constantly speak of him only as intending, or not intending, to make impressions on passive recipients. This is plainly turning the Moral Governor out of a transaction which was exclusively his own, and transferring the whole business to the sovereign efficient cause. This has been the grand mistake of Calvinists of the type of a part of the Synod of Dort. They have reasoned right against the Arminians about election and regeneration, but on several points have plainly lost sight of moral agents and a moral government. On the other hand, the Arminians have had many correct ideas of a moral government, but

have been as blind as Bartimeus to all the secrets of the other department. And thus these two parties have gone on contending from age to age, and after all both have been right — and both wrong.

This limiting phraseology, mean what it may (for it has different meanings in different mouths), is far from being harmless. Whatever latent reservations may lurk beneath it, on its face it carries a wrong view of the nature of the atonement itself, making it an absolute provision for a part, instead of a conditional provision for all. If it means to deny that the provision was for all as agents, this is so incongruous with the offer to all as agents, and the obligations laid upon all as agents to live by it, and the punishment of all as agents who reject it, that, in spite of all explanations, it amounts, though unintentionally, to an impeachment of the sincerity and justice of God. If, without asserting any thing concerning agents, it only buries them from view, even then, by leaving no sense in which the atonement could respect the non-elect, it carries men to the frightful length of denying that it was any expression of benevolence to this part of the race, or even that God has any benevolence towards them, or so much as a "general affection to them as creatures." And this takes from them all reasons for gratitude, except what is founded in ignorance of their destiny, and leads all men to doubt, in proportion as they hesitate about their own election, whether they have any cause to thank God for their existence, or for one of all his mercies. If it distinctly admits what is meant by an atonement for all as agents, and yet persists in affirming that it was not for all, it exactly annihilates moral agents, and that capacity on which human obligations rest, and the basis which supports the whole fabric of a moral government. This is the greatest objection of all. And to make even this more intense, the phraseology in question propagates an error so disastrous. By means of this, the plain portable position that Christ did not die for all, is carried through the world, and calls to its support all those reasonings and forms of speech which conceal the foundation of human obligations, and cast obscurity over all the relations and principles of a moral government. The world need a right phraseology on this subject, to familiarize to their minds their own distinct and complete agency, their obligations, guilt, and privileges, and the claims and mercies of God. But the dialect in question carries in it a systematic concealment of human agency and God's direct claims upon mankind, and is not unlike what the sinner himself employs, when, filling his eye with the divine decrees, he takes shelter in the plea that he is a machine. With the better part it does not lead to a denial of the desert of punishment, but it obscures their personal responsibility, and sends them back to Adam to make out what otherwise would seem an insufficient ground of

condemnation. It hides the direct and perfect claims which God has upon rational creatures, willing or unwilling. To expose and urge these claims direct is the best way to make sinners, and even Christians, feel their obligations, privileges, and inexcusableness. It is the deadening of this sense which makes stupidity.

A self-justifying race are sufficiently prone to plead that they are machines, that God is a hard master requiring more than they are able to perform, that they are not answerable for their impenitence and unbelief, that while the Spirit is withheld they have not a fair chance for salvation, and enjoy no privileges, and are under no obligations to Christ. And it deserves solemn consideration how far the incorrect language of good men on this subject has tended to confirm and propagate a delusion so destructive to the souls of men.

PART III.

SCRIPTURAL VIEW.

CHAPTER I.

PLAN OF THE ARGUMENT.

ALL that we have to prove from the Scriptures is, that the atonement, where the gospel comes, is a provision for all as moral agents ; that in order to become such, it changed the relations which all as moral agents sustained to the divine law ; and that, to produce this effect, it was expressly offered with such an intent.

That is a provision for a moral agent which he is capable of improving for his good if well disposed, and is bound to improve. The obligation cannot be imposed without the capacity. We have seen that no bond, except by means of deception, can be laid on a man to accept a privilege, which, from the foreknowledge that he would not improve it, was not provided for him ; for that would be an obligation to perform an impossibility. The capacity implies that the provision is made in such a sense, that, just as it now is, he can actually enjoy it by doing his duty. Simon Magus, had Simon Magus believed (and as the thing was not a natural impossibility we have a right to make the supposition), would have found a provision ready for him, just as the purpose of the atonement then stood, or he had not a capacity to make it his own even by believing ; for had he believed it would not have been his own. The nine hundred prisoners, in the case of the pearl sufficient for one thousand but offered for one hundred, could not have come out had they accepted the offer. You say it was foreknown that they would not accept. Be it so. Yet if the herald at the door had told them that they could then come out by accepting, he would have uttered a falsehood ; for had they attempted it they would have been stopped. It is in vain to say,

“If you suppose one thing changed in a series established by infinite wisdom, you ought to suppose a corresponding change in the whole system; if you suppose that a non-elect man may believe, you should suppose at the same time that both the decree of election and redemption correspond with this event, and then all difficulty will be removed.” I have nothing to do with that supposition. I am speaking of men as moral agents, whose capacity and freedom are not impaired by any decree, and whose faith, be decrees what they may, we have a right to speak of as possible. If we may not speak of them thus, what is their capacity? that of a block; and nothing remains but perfect fatality. And if we may speak thus of the non-elect (not as non-elect, but as moral agents), then we may suppose, without reference to any decree, what would happen in case they should believe. And now it is either true in such a case that they would find a provision ready for them, just as the purpose of atonement now stands, or else it is not true that they have a capacity to use it for their benefit. If they cannot enjoy it without changing a decree of God, as your supposition implies, the thing is a natural impossibility. But if they would find a provision for them in case they of their own accord should believe, then an atonement was made for them in such a sense that they can enjoy it by doing their duty. And that is a complete provision for them as moral agents.

And if the atonement is such a provision for them as moral agents, it certainly changed their relations to the divine law, and from a state in which they could not be pardoned on any terms, brought them into a condition in which their pardon is possible, and in which nothing stands in the way but their own unbelief.

How the atonement came to have this influence on those who remain unsanctified is another question. Some ascribe it to its sufficiency, others to the express purpose for which it was offered. One thing is certain. No sufficiency could have produced this effect which should have left their discharge impossible, even on the supposition of their faith. It could not, therefore, be such a sufficiency as is ascribed to the pearl, which, valuable enough to redeem one thousand, is offered and accepted for one hundred, leaving it impossible for the rest to come out even should they accept the insidious offer. It is not indeed necessary to that sufficiency that there should have been a secret purpose to make men “willing” by an operation on them as passive; but it is necessary that the sacrifice should have been understood to be offered and accepted in such a sense for them, that, should they of their own accord believe, they would be discharged. It must have been offered and accepted with an express purpose of affecting their relations exactly in this manner,

“that whosoever believeth — should not perish.” That is, it must have been expressly offered and accepted for them as moral agents.

These are the only points necessary to be supported, and the basis which I shall place beneath them is the word of God.

I will begin at the concession of the Synod of Dort, that the non-elect do not perish “for want of the sacrifice of Christ, — nor through its insufficiency, but by their own fault.” This concession implies a provision made for them in such a sense that they can enjoy it by doing their duty. It implies a provision offered to them with the promise of pardon if they will accept it, or how is their failure their own fault? It implies a command to believe, or how do they violate an obligation? And the offer, promise, and command imply that the atonement so changed their relations as to render their pardon consistent with the honor of the law, if they would believe. And this it could not have done without being expressly offered for them as moral agents. After this manner I shall construct my argument. The whole may be comprised in the four following propositions: —

I. In the offers and promises of the gospel, the benefit of the atonement is not only proposed, but actually given and made over to all as moral agents, as far as it can be before they have performed their part.

II. The benefit of the atonement is so brought within the reach of all who hear the gospel, that they are bound to make it their own, and can enjoy it by only doing their duty.

III. The atonement so changed the relations of all men to the divine law, as to render their pardon consistent with the honor of the law in case they hear the gospel and believe.

IV. The atonement was expressly offered and accepted for all as moral agents.

CHAPTER II.

THE BENEFIT OF THE ATONEMENT MADE OVER TO ALL.

THE first proposition is, that in the offers and promises of the gospel, the benefit of the atonement is not only proposed, but actually given and made over to all as moral agents, as far as it can be before they have performed their part.*

* Our view of the grant differs from that of the Remonstrants in this. We say it is all God can do for moral agents otherwise than as a reward; they said it was all he could do for men without destroying their freedom. Their error lay in denying special grace in regeneration.

If pardon by the atonement is really offered to all, with a promise that it shall be theirs if they do not cast it away, then (allowing the acceptance not to be a natural impossibility but their duty), the whole benefit is made over to them as moral agents, as fully as it can be before they have performed their part. The complete privilege of an atonement is theirs. And if this is the case, the matter is settled. There is no longer any need of inquiring about the nature of the expiation, or the express purpose for which it was offered: we find the privilege actually in the hands of all. God himself guarantees that the nature of the satisfaction was such as to warrant the universal grant, and that is enough for us.

The offer and promise certainly prove that the provision was for all as capable agents, or for all in such a sense that they can actually enjoy it by doing their duty. And this is all we ask.

But an attempt is made to account for the offer on the ground of the sufficiency of the atonement, without supposing the provision in any sense for all. "That may be sufficient for the ransom of one thousand prisoners which in fact is paid for one hundred. Suppose the ransom price to be a pearl of exceeding great value, much more than sufficient to redeem all the captives in prison: but the person paying it had it in view only to redeem his own friends. This intention in the redeemer, and the acceptance of the price by the authority which holds them in bondage, constitutes this pearl a ransom, and confines it to the number for whom it was designed. But the pearl itself is sufficient to ransom all the rest of the captives, if it had been applied to their advantage. To carry on the illustration. Suppose that the person undertaking to redeem his friends should say, 'I will have proclamation made in the prison, that every one who will acknowledge me as his deliverer, and will subject himself to my authority, may immediately come forth upon the footing of the ransom which I have paid; for none but my friends will accept these terms. The remainder will prefer their prison to liberty, which can only be had by submission to one whom they inveterately hate.' Now the person commissioned to carry these tidings to the prison would feel himself authorized to proclaim deliverance to every one who was willing to accept the terms, and use arguments and motives to induce them to submit: but the event would be, that none would accept the offer but the real friends of the redeemer. This he knew from the beginning; and therefore he paid the ransom for no others. Is there any thing insincere in this whole transaction? The messenger is not authorized to declare that the whole are certainly ransomed, but that there is a ransom provided for every one who will accept the terms."

Now this is as ingenious as it could be; and all that is wanting to make it a just representation is an agreement publicly made with the retainer

of the prisoners, that if the nine hundred attempt to come out they shall not be stopped. Then, whatever foreknowledge there might be of the refusal of a part, there would be a ransom paid for all as capable agents. But for want of this the representation does not agree with the gospel: for that the Father has publicly engaged not to cast off any of the human race who come to him, every reader of the Bible knows. For want of this the representation disagrees with the gospel in a point which gives the transaction the appearance of great unfairness. If the nine hundred had attempted to come out they would certainly have been stopped, and none the less for the value of the pearl. That value was only a blind, and in no degree justified the offer. But for the advantage gained by a deceptive appearance, the proclamation might as well have been made without that sufficiency. Such a doctrine tends to make every one distrust the sincerity of the offer, and to say, as the unbelieving are too apt to do, It does not mean me, and I shall not be accepted if I go. In all this it differs from the gospel. Who will pretend to say that if Judas had believed (and I hope enough has been said to justify the supposition), he would have been rejected? But if he had believed, you say, it would have been foreknown, and the atonement would have been made for him. And are you sure it would have been foreknown? We have no other idea of God's foreknowledge than that it is founded on his own purpose to produce or permit. He therefore foreknew whether he should give faith to Judas. But this possible action of which I am speaking would not have been caused by God, nor have grown out of any purpose of his. How, then, should it have been foreknown? No event is in fact unforeknown; because, beyond what is produced by the direct influence of God, the universe is governed by motives, the tendency of which he perfectly understands. But the possibility of the action under consideration did not depend on the power of motives to influence the temper which that sinner actually possessed. The temper itself was not necessary. It was certain, but the certainty was not that physical necessity which rendered a different issue naturally impossible. Had Judas felt as he ought, he would have fallen under the control of motives in a way different from what was ever calculated in heaven. Had he done as he ought, an event would have taken place which was never foreseen. And had he felt and done as he ought without the influence which God controlled (and his obligations were independent of that), an event would have taken place, which, so far as we can judge, could not have been foreseen. No such event ever did or will occur: I only make these remarks to show how independent of divine foreknowledge the natural possibility of action is. Unnumbered actions, which God never foreknew, are still naturally possible, or prescience reduces every thing to fate.

It is on this ground that God, in all his treatment of moral agents (except in the single instance of prophecy), proceeds just as though he had no foreknowledge. The capacity of creatures to act, and of course the natural possibility of their action, and their obligations, are independent of prescience; and the Moral Governor, founding his course on that capacity and possibility, and on those obligations, holds his way as though nothing was foreseen.

In the case of the prisoners, you are reduced to this dilemma. Either the offer of release to the nine hundred was made deceitfully, or on the avowed principle of setting them free without a price paid for them. And are you prepared to say that God has avowed the principle of offering to the non-elect a pardon unfounded on the atonement? that when he would not discharge his own elect without exacting life for life, he has offered to release others without an expiation? The other alternative is chosen, and God is set forth as offering the benefit of a ransom which has never been paid, and tendering a deliverance which, if accepted, would be denied; for it is truly said in the same paper, that "the death of Christ must expiate our sins before any way can be opened" for pardon.

If prescience is to have any influence in such a matter, why do you stop here? It ought to carry you to a denial that the offer was designed for the non-elect. If foreknowledge prevented the atonement from being made for them, foreknowledge would prevent the offer from being intended for them. And some have actually gone to this length, and affirmed that the offer is made only to the "thirsty" and those who "will" come, and was not designed for those who it was foreseen would not be thirsty or willing.

This brings us to the proof that the offer and promise are indeed made to all. Facts will not bear you out in saying that the offer is made only to the elect, and falls on the ear of others incidentally, like a preacher addressing a select society, heedless of the strangers who have mingled with the crowd. No, the speaker calls those strangers by name, and declares that he means them, and lays them individually under the most solemn obligations to receive the message, and afterwards sends them all to prison for rejecting it. Those who refused to come to the wedding were the identical persons to whom the invitation had been expressly sent; and the wicked at last will be condemned for the rejection of calls made to them in particular. Prov. 1: 24-31. Matt. 22: 1-14.

Either the grant is so completely made to all and each as to lay a foundation on which faith with all its confidence (for it must not waver, James 1: 6) can rest its eternal and infinite concerns, or every act which appropriates the gospel to one's self antecedent to the full assur-

ance of hope, must be presumptuous. If the grant is made only to the elect, no man has a right to rest his own soul on the promise, until, from his feelings towards the abstract gospel, he knows himself to be one of the elect. And throughout his life, in proportion as he questions his election, he must be perplexed with doubts about his right to take the invitation to himself, and rest his soul on Christ. In all its appropriating acts, his faith can never exert its energies unrestrained, but must be cramped and manacled with the unceasing apprehension that it has no warrant to make the appropriation. Am I elected? will be the leading inquiry, instead of, What has God promised?

I argue the same thing from the very nature of faith. This is a belief either of a divine testimony or promise. But there is no testimony that this, that, or the other man is elected; the testimony respects the public mission of Christ, and the method and conditions of salvation. So far, then, as testimony is concerned, faith must exert all her attributes independently of the question who is elected. And if there are any personal concerns to transact with Christ,—if I am to receive him for my Saviour, and not merely to regard him as a Saviour in general, I must unreservedly receive him for my own on the authority given in the public dispensation of the gospel, without reference to the question whether I am elected. If this is the nature of faith, then in that public dispensation the grant must be made to all. Turn now to the promise. I cannot believe a promise to me, if there is none. I have no right to believe that God will be “a rewarder” to me on any conditions, if there is no promise to me. But it is the privilege and duty of all men, without waiting for evidence of their election, to exercise this confidence, which indeed is so essential a part of faith, that without it no man can gain the favor of God. “Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder [of the elect? no, without distinction] of them that diligently seek him.” Heb. 11: 6. This confidence, which certainly every man is to exercise in relation to himself, and not merely in reference to others, is thus made the very definition of faith itself. And it will appear in another place, that every man is commanded upon pain of death to believe. Every man, then, is laid under bonds to exercise unwavering assurance that he himself shall be accepted, if he diligently seeks. Whatever opinion he may form of his state and character, he must believe this as firmly as his own existence. A doubt on this subject is the very unbelief against which eternal plagues are denounced. The grand effort of every sincere and enlightened seeker is to work his soul up to this confidence, which would be dashed in a moment by a doubt

respecting the extension of the promise to him. This bond on every man infallibly proves a conditional promise to every man on which his confidence may rest.

And this has been the common opinion of the Calvinistic world. It was the opinion of Calvin himself. In his *Comment on Rom. 5: 18*, we find this declaration: "He makes this the common grace of all because it is set before all, not because it is actually extended to all. For though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and by the goodness of God is indiscriminately offered to all, yet all do not embrace him."*

This was also the opinion of the Synod of Dort. "The promise of the gospel is this, that whosoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have everlasting life; which promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought without distinction and indiscriminately to be announced and proposed to all people and men to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel." "As many as are called by the gospel are called in earnest; for in earnest and most truly does God show in his word what is agreeable to him, namely, that the called come to him. In earnest, likewise, he promises to all who come to him and believe, rest to their souls and eternal life. And that many who are called by the ministry of the gospel do not come and are not converted, is not to be imputed as a fault to the gospel, nor to Christ offered in the gospel, nor to God calling by the gospel, but to the called themselves."† The delegates from Great Britain say, "There is no mortal who may not truly and in earnest be called by the ministers of the gospel to a participation of remission of sins and eternal life through this death of Christ. Nothing false or dissembling goes under the gospel; but whatever in it is offered or promised to men by ministers is in the same manner offered and promised to them by the author of the gospel. — In this merit of Christ's death is founded the universal gospel promise, according to which all who believe in Christ do actually obtain remission of sins and eternal life. That this promise is universal, and founded in the death of Christ, appears from Acts 10: 43. Although, therefore, this promise is not promulgated to all in every place and time, it is of such a nature that it might truly be announced to all and each. — The administration of grace in the church, where, according to this promise of the gospel, salvation is offered to all, is enough to convict all the impenitent and unbelieving that it was by their own fault, and either through their neglect or contempt of the gospel, that they per-

* Quoted in Watts's Works, vol. 6, p. 287.

† Acts of Synod, Part I. p. 289, 298.

ished and lost the offered benefit." * The delegates from Hesse say, "The gospel is proclaimed indiscriminately to all, to the elect and reprobate." † Matthias Martinus, one of the delegates from Bremen, says, "The exercise of this love to man appears in the outward call to the elect and reprobate without distinction. — And, therefore, upon whatever man we fall, to him we are the messengers and publishers of this salutary grace." ‡ Henry Iselburg, another delegate from Bremen, says, "The remedy of sin and death, our Lord Jesus Christ, is proposed and offered by the preaching of the gospel, not to certain persons only, or to those alone who are to be saved, but to the elect and reprobate indiscriminately; and all without distinction are invited to a participation or fruition of it, and to eternal life thereby." § The Dutch professors say, "It is not denied by the orthodox, that this ransom of Christ is to be indiscriminately announced as such [as being sufficient to save all who believe] to Christian people, and to whomsoever the gospel is preached, and to be offered in the name of Christ, and that in earnest, and according to the counsel of the Father; the hidden decisions of God being in the mean time left to himself, who dispenses this grace, and applies it as far as and to whomsoever he will." ||

Some members of the synod did indeed acknowledge that their own practice was to present the officers of the gospel only to the thirsty and penitent; alleging that when they preached repentance to all it was not preaching the gospel. What, not when, like John the Baptist, they preached "repentance for the remission of sins?" or, like the apostles, said to the unregenerate multitude, "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out?" Mark 1: 4. Acts 3: 19. But if they still hesitate to present the gospel to the carnal, I will spread before them the following page. "Wisdom hath builded her house; she hath hewn out her seven pillars, she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also furnished her table; she hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple let him turn in hither, and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled: forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding." "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. — Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well. — Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "We

* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 101, 102. † Ibid. p. 114. ‡ Ibid. p. 134, 135.

§ Ibid. p. 141.

|| Ibid. Part III. p. 122.

pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." But this is preaching repentance; what then will you say of the next? "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Prov. 9: 1-6. Is. 1: 10-18. 45: 22. 2 Cor. 5: 20.

That the call is extended to the non-elect is a fact expressly asserted in so many words: "Many be called, but few chosen." Those who belong to this class are invited when they are hardy enough to make light of the invitation, and even to destroy the messengers who bring it. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage. But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. And the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them. But when the king heard thereof he was wroth, and he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers and burnt up their city. Then saith he to his servants, the wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy: go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. And he saith unto him, friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away and cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." Matt. 20: 16. 22: 2-14.

All this was fulfilled in the invitations to the Jews, and in the commission to the apostles, "Go ye into all the world and preach," not repentance only, but "the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16: 15, 16.

The preachers of the Old Testament had made indiscriminate offers of life to the Jews in the name of a Saviour to come. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Christ himself did the same. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins

should be preached in his name among all nations." To the "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked," he said, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in a fire that thou mayst be rich, and white raiment that thou mayst be clothed." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me." "The Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." After the same manner the apostles preached. To a mixed assembly of Jews and heathen, in the first gospel sermon ever preached in the place, one of them said, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Luke 24: 47. John 3: 36. 5: 24. Acts 10: 43. 13: 38, 39. Rev. 3: 17, 18, 20. 22: 17.

Thus the grant is actually made to all, laying a solid foundation for their faith. By this important circumstance the non-elect are distinguished from devils. The latter have no foundation for faith, because there is no promise for them to believe. A God of truth has not unbarred their prison and assured them of mercy through his Son if they will accept it. The promise and oath of God have not fallen on the ear of hell. This vast difference lies between devils and non-elect men. One have a stable foundation for their faith,—for a full assurance that they shall be pardoned by Christ, if they will believe; the other have no foundation at all. One have an actual grant of pardon made to them as moral agents, as far as it can be made before they have performed their part; the other are delivered over to gleamless despair. One can easily make remission their own, if only well disposed; the other could not be discharged, if they were as holy as Gabriel. One will actually be pardoned if they believe, the decree of non-election notwithstanding; the other have nothing to believe but the sentence of eternal reprobation. One hear it said, with an eye directly fixed on them, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage;" affirming in the plainest terms, the provision was made for you; the other are constantly hearing the sentence, "Depart, ye cursed." And yet, was no discrimination made between non-elect men and devils in the provision for pardon?

CHAPTER III.

ALL MEN BOUND TO MAKE THE BENEFIT THEIR OWN.

AFTER all that has been said, if the benefit is offered to the non-elect upon impossible conditions, it is still not provided for them as moral agents, and the grant really amounts to nothing. This is the very opening by which some who admit the universality of the grant elude the force of this stupendous fact. It is impossible, say they, for the non-elect to believe, because faith is "the gift of God;" and on this assumption they proceed to draw their conclusions, just as though the non-elect were dead masses of matter. If this was the case, or if salvation had been offered them upon any condition which they had not natural ability to fulfil (for instance, on their possessing the strength of a Goliath or the intellect of an Aristotle), then, indeed, the offer would not have proved a provision for them as moral agents. But if the benefit had been suspended on their stretching out the hand, it would have been easy for all to see that it was provided for them as capable agents, though they should have lost it by refusing to perform that act. Now if they do possess a capacity which is a *bonâ fide* basis of obligation, and which bears the same relation to the obligation to believe that muscular strength would to the obligation to extend an arm at the divine command; if they can be as reasonably required to do the one as the other, and as reasonably punished for the neglect, without resting any part of their obligation on Adam; then a benefit which is suspended on their faith is just as much provided for them as moral agents (or as creatures under obligations), as though it had been suspended on their stretching out the hand. And the only reason why it is not easy for us to realize this, is the difficulty we find in apprehending that their natural powers are as complete a basis of obligation in the one case as in the other. If it was familiar to the mind, that a rational creature, separated from the Spirit, is as perfectly and reasonably bound to believe on Christ as to extend an arm at the divine command, every difficulty would vanish. We should then see that the benefit of an atonement is as completely provided for those who remain unsanctified, as the house which they are at liberty to occupy, or the office which is suspended on their own choice.

It becomes, then, a question of vital importance, what relation unbelievers bear to faith in point of ability and obligation; whether they are to be viewed in this matter as impotent machines, or as men possessed of ample natural powers and under reasonable bonds.

This brings us to the second proposition in the plan of the argument, which was, that the benefit of the atonement is so brought within the reach of all who hear the gospel, that they are bound to make it their own, and can enjoy it by only doing their duty. Nothing is necessary to support this proposition but the two following facts:—

(1) The faith on which the benefit is suspended is required of all. Of every man that “charity” is demanded which “believeth all things.” And many texts might be quoted like the following: “This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.” To the unbelieving Jews who afterwards died in their sins, such injunctions as these were addressed: “Repent ye, and believe the gospel.” “Though ye believe not me, believe the works.” “While ye have the light, believe in the light.” “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” Mark 1: 15. John 6: 29. 10: 38. 12: 36. 1 Cor. 13: 7. 1 John 3: 23.

(2) The unbelief of sinners is condemned and punished. “He will reprove the world of sin,—because they believe not on me.” “Ye have not his word abiding in you, for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” “If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” “He that believeth not shall be damned.” “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” “If our gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.” “That they all might be damned who believed not the truth; but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” “To whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?” That tremendous burst of wrath which overwhelmed the Jewish nation, and which follows them to this day, is a standing monument to the world of the vengeance of God against unbelief. So completely does the fault lie on sinners, that God wipes his hands of their blood, and, in a manner which implies that he has not failed to make ample provision for them, says, “What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?” “As I live—I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye,—for why will ye die?” Isa. 5: 4. Ezek. 33: 11. Mark 16: 16. John 3: 18, 19. 5: 38, 40. 8: 24. 16: 8, 9. 2 Cor. 4: 3, 4. 2 Thess. 2: 12. Heb. 3: 18.

That the wicked lose the benefit of the atonement by their own fault, is supported, as we have seen, by the collective testimony of the Synod of Dort. I will now add the opinion of several of the particular classes

of delegates. Those from Hesse say, that mankind "are all commanded to believe in Christ, and that the unbelieving are justly condemned for their unbelief." * Those from the Wetteraw say, "The sufficiency and magnitude of the ransom of Christ, as relates to the reprobate, has a double end, one in itself and the other by accident. The end by accident is, that they may be without excuse: because they perish, not by the fault of Christ, but by their own; since by their own unbelief they reject the benefits of Christ offered in the gospel." † Matthias Martinus, a delegate from Bremen, says, "In this [outward] call are to be distinguished these things: the historical narrative concerning Christ, the command to believe, the interdiction of unbelief, the promise of eternal life made to unbelievers, the threatening of damnation to the unbelieving. And if any one does not believe, the issue of this call is condemnation, and expressly for this reason, because he does not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3: 18.) But this issue in itself is not intended by God, but follows by accident through the fault of man. For these things [which are required as conditions of salvation], men are bound by the power of a divine command to perform themselves; and they who are not able to do this, are not able through their own fault." ‡ A moral inability. Henry Iselburg, another delegate from Bremen, says, "All and each are sincerely and seriously commanded to believe in Christ;—and they who do not believe in the name of the Son of God are justly condemned. No one of the reprobate can be condemned and perish for want of the death of Christ, or because there was not in him a sufficient remedy against destruction, but each one through his own fault entirely." § The delegates from Drent say, "It is most true that the reprobate perish by their own fault." ||

Thus it is agreed on all hands, that those who remain unsanctified have the benefit of the atonement so within their reach that they ought to make it their own, and have no right to lose it, and are charged with a most unreasonable and wicked neglect in not applying it to themselves; that God peremptorily forbids them to do without it, and when they attempt to put it from them will take no excuse, and at last will visit them with eternal punishment for throwing it out of their hands. He actually enters against them, in the accounts of a moral government, the charge of an atonement, as a provision made for their use, as a privilege, a talent committed to them; and he will act upon this charge at the judgment of the great day and throughout eternity. In that part of his ad-

* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 114.

† Ibid. p. 134, 137.

|| Ibid. Part III. p. 205.

† Ibid. p. 128.

§ Ibid. p. 141, 142.

ministration in which he is the most scrupulous to weigh all things in exact scales, and to express all matters with literal truth, he will pronounce, in tones as deliberate and solemn as eternal damnation, that an atonement was provided for them, and that they madly threw it away.

Now this decides the question. There is no occasion any longer to inquire about the nature of the atonement, or the express purpose for which it was offered; we find the privilege actually in the hands of all. Their obligation to use it for their benefit makes it true, independently of every other circumstance, that it is for them as moral agents.

I know of but one way in which an evasion of this argument can even be attempted. It will be said that God, foreknowing that the non-elect would not accept an atonement if provided for them, did not make the provision; and yet, concealing the fact from them, and to bring out their hearts to view, commanded them to accept it. This is exactly the case presented in the parable of the prisoners and the pearl. By this case, then, let the principle be tried.

Whether the ransom was accepted for the nine hundred as capable agents, depends on the question whether they would have been stopt had they attempted to come out. That it is lawful to make the supposition of such an attempt, though it was foreknown that it would not be made, appears from this: foreknowledge does not cause an event, and therefore has no influence in making it certain, but is only a perception of what that certainty is. Where it is foreseen that an event will not take place, the foresight has no influence to prevent its occurrence, or to destroy the power of creatures to produce it, or to render the occurrence a natural impossibility. If the certainty which exists in the thing itself has no influence on any of these matters, the knowledge of that certainty manifestly has not. But if the certainty which exists in the thing itself destroys the power of creatures to do otherwise than they do, and renders a different course a natural impossibility, then every thing is fate, and men are machines. Foreknowledge has no more influence on the event, or on the possibility of its being otherwise, or on the power of creatures, than after knowledge. But after we know a thing to be certain by actually witnessing the event, we perceive that neither this certainty nor this knowledge had any influence on the power of the agents concerned. In the case under consideration, we plainly see that neither the foreknowledge that the nine hundred would not come out, nor our after knowledge that they did not come out, had any effect on their power. They certainly were able to come out. Upon the principle now opposed, because a thing is certain we may not make the supposition of its being otherwise. But even after the event, we do make this supposition continually. In explaining the influence of causes, or the relation between an-

tecedents and consequents, we constantly say, had circumstances been so and so, consequences would have been thus and thus; and we have a right to speak in this manner of all events which do not involve a natural impossibility. We have a right, then, to ask what would have been the consequence had the nine hundred accepted the offer.

And now in such an event they either would have been stopt or they would not. If they would, the whole transaction was a trick, and no command, unless supported by falsehood, could have imposed on them an obligation to come out, because the thing was a natural impossibility. And if this is the case with the non-elect, it is not true, as the Synod of Dort affirm, that they do not perish "for want of the sacrifice of Christ;" they do perish in one sense for want of that sacrifice, and in another through their own unbelief. They perish for want of the sacrifice in this sense, that they would perish if every other cause were removed; in other words, should they actually believe they would not be pardoned.

On the other hand, if the prisoners would not have been stopped, but would have been permitted to come out on the ground of the ransom offered, then that ransom was certainly accepted for them as capable agents. And if you have evidence that they would not have been stopt by their retainer, it must be because he had publicly engaged that they should come out if they would on the ground of the ransom paid. And if he had made such an engagement, he had, by a public covenant, accepted the ransom for them as capable agents. No matter what secret respect the redeemer had to the happiness of the hundred. No matter what foresight the retainer had of the obstinacy of the rest. Here is a public acceptance of the ransom for the nine hundred as capable agents. And pray what more was done, or could be done, for the favored hundred? The ransom was not accepted for them in case they would not come out. No, you say, but the redeemer and retainer both knew they would. Granted; but still their coming out was an exertion of their own agency, which must not be buried up or passed over in silence. This thing, which belonged neither to the redeemer nor retainer, but to themselves, was a necessary antecedent to their deliverance, and ought to be spoken of as such. The ransom, then, was manifestly offered for the hundred to procure their deliverance on the supposition of their coming out; and it was publicly agreed between the parties that it should obtain the deliverance of the nine hundred on condition that they would come out. The only difference was, that the parties foreknew that one class would come out, and that the other would not. But as this foreknowledge did not destroy the completeness of moral agency, nor any of its attributes, but left every thing pertaining to the agents unimpaired and unchanged, it did not prevent the ransom from being as completely offered and accepted for the nine hundred as agents as for the rest.

On the whole, if the obligation of sinners to make the benefit their own does not prove that the atonement was offered and accepted for them as moral agents, it does not prove that the benefit would be theirs even should they fulfil their obligations. And then it is made their duty to secure an advantage which they could not secure by doing their duty. They are commanded to do a natural impossibility upon pain of damnation, and are eternally punished for not performing what with the best dispositions they could not have done. And they would have seen the oppression of the command had they not been blinded by deception.

No such thing as this is found in the gospel. The Father, who is represented by the retainer of the prisoners, has solemnly and publicly covenanted that all shall go out on the ground of the atonement if they will believe, and has thus openly declared it accepted for all as moral agents. He is the "King which made a marriage for his Son," and sent his servants to say to the identical persons whom he afterwards destroyed, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage." I have prepared my dinner for you if you will receive it; all things are ready for you, if you will partake. It was in obedience to his command that the Son declared, "He that believeth — shall be saved." "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life." Matt. 22: 4. Mark 16: 16. John 6: 40. Thus the Father has solemnly pledged himself that he has accepted the atonement for all; and this information is brought to the world by the Redeemer himself. The parties, then, are both active in proclaiming this public acceptance of the atonement for all. It is in vain longer to insist on any secret intention of Christ; here is his own voice openly pronouncing the atonement accepted for all by the mutual understanding of the parties. On supposition, then, that they who remain unsanctified should believe, they certainly would be pardoned.

But it is said, if this supposition is made, we must also suppose that the decree of redemption accorded with this fact. No, but the message to the identical persons who perished, and in the very circumstances in which they then stood, was, "All things are ready" for you; not, all things would have been ready had it been foreseen that you would come. It was declared that the oxen and fatlings had been actually killed in sufficient numbers to supply them all, and that they, invited as they were, stood in such a relation to the feast that they could that day enjoy it by only accepting the offer; implying that no natural impossibility lay in the way, as in the supposed case of the pearl. Had it only been true that the feast would have been so prepared for them had it been foreseen that they would accept it, what was said was palpably false. Nor can it be

alleged that this was only a parable. The plain and direct language of the gospel to those who remain unsanctified is exactly the same. The individuals of that number are expressly told to-day, that the atonement has been, not would have been, accepted for them, in such a sense as to place remission within their reach. Without the least reference to foreknowledge, and as the purpose of atonement now stands, they are told that they, the present capable agents (and they are just as capable as though a different result had been foreseen), can receive the benefit only by believing; that it is their indispensable duty to make it their own; and that if they fail to appropriate it to themselves, they shall be eternally punished for that most unreasonable neglect. All this is said to them to-day, just as foreknowledge and the purpose of atonement now stand. And if it is not so, the report is not according to truth, and the command and subsequent punishment are — what I will not impute to the righteous Governor of the world.

CHAPTER IV.

ACTUAL INFLUENCE OF THE ATONEMENT UPON ALL.

THE third proposition laid down in the plan of the argument was, that the atonement so changed the relations of all men to the divine law, as to render their pardon consistent with the honor of the law in case they hear the gospel and believe. Before I proceed to the proof of this proposition, I wish to draw the reader's attention closely to the following remarks.

(1) If it is allowed that the atonement did change the relations of all men to the divine law, in this precise respect, that it rendered their actual pardon consistent with the honor of the law if they would believe; the whole is granted that any one pleads for, as respects the actual influence of the atonement on those who perish. The only remaining question, then, will be, how came it to have such an influence on all?

(2) If the atonement did render the pardon of all men consistent with the honor of the law in case they would believe, then it essentially changed the relations of all men to the divine law as it did not that of devils. In their natural relation as transgressors, they could not have been pardoned consistently with the honor of the law, even had they returned to holiness. This was the very reason why an atonement was necessary. Had it been consistent with the honor of the law to pardon sinners on their mere return to holiness, their actual pardon might have been accomplished by the

mission of the Spirit without an expiation for sin. Devils still retain this natural relation to the law; and should they return to holiness (a supposition allowable even of them as moral agents), they could not be pardoned. If, then, the atonement did render the pardon of all men consistent with the honor of the law in case they would believe, it essentially changed the relation of all men to the law as it did not that of devils.

(3) If the relations of all men to the divine law are thus changed, or if their pardon has become consistent with the honor of the law in case they will believe, this change has been wrought by the atonement. Nothing else has taken place to produce it; nothing else could. If any thing but an infinitely dignified sacrifice could have rendered the pardon of men consistent with the honor of the law on any terms, the Son of God would not have died.

(4) If the relations of all men to the divine law are not thus changed, or if their pardon has not become consistent with the honor of the law on the supposition of their faith, then a part could not be pardoned even should they believe. Believe what? The promise and oath of God that they shall be pardoned if they do believe. Had not that promise been made, there would have been no more foundation for their faith than for that of devils; and it would have been utterly without a meaning to talk of their being pardoned in case they would believe. The very supposition of its being consistent with the honor of the law for them to be pardoned if they believe, implies that there is something in relation to their own salvation for them to believe. It implies that the promise of God has assured them that they shall be pardoned by the atonement if they do believe. And this promise could not have been made had not the atonement rendered their actual pardon consistent with the honor of the law on the supposition of their faith. This leads directly to the proof of the proposition at the head of the chapter.

This proof is contained in the two propositions which went before; namely, that in the offer and promise, the benefit of the atonement is actually given and made over to all who hear the gospel, on the condition of their faith; and that they are laid under obligations to make it their own, and are punished for throwing it away. It ought to be distinctly noticed, that if these two facts prove that the relation of all men to the divine law is changed, they prove that it was changed by the atonement. The offer and promise are of pardon through that very sacrifice; and the faith commanded is a reliance on that expiation and promise. Let us then consider the argument, first, as it is drawn from the grant, and secondly, as it is deduced from the obligation.

(1) As it is drawn from the grant. The benefit of the atonement is offered to all. Should all accept (and this supposition is allowable),

would they or would they not find their pardon to be consistent with the honor of the law? If not, they might justly complain of a grievous deception. If the king who invited the guests to the marriage feast, had made provision only for half, you would certainly have charged him with duplicity and mockery. True, you say, because he could not foresee how many would come. And has it not been proved that all the measures of a moral government have the same consistency of relation as though there was no foreknowledge? The character in which God stands related to moral agents is preserved as consistent with itself as that of any wise and just earthly prince can be. The Moral Governor, to whom appertained both the atonement and offer, would no more invite a greater number than he had provided for, than would any fair and honorable man. If ample provision is not made for all, that class of Christians alone take consistent ground who deny the universality of the offer. Again, in the offer and promise there is a foundation laid for the faith of all. And can it be supposed that there is a foundation laid in the grant for all to believe, and no foundation in the atonement for their faith to profit them? Then they stand, after all, exactly on the ground of devils,—with this difference against them, that they are tantalized with offers, which, should they attempt to seize them, would escape from their grasp. In the case of devils, there is no atonement and no foundation laid for their faith. This is consistent. But to lay a foundation for the faith of men, and no foundation for their faith to profit them, would in human transactions be stigmatized with an epithet which I dare not even by supposition apply to the blessed God. That Christ is offered to those to whom he could not become a Saviour even should they believe,—to whom he would be no blessing if they should receive him, is what I hope no one will continue to maintain. A foundation for faith, and no foundation for faith to profit! I wonder that single thought should have left a remaining doubt below the sun. No foundation for faith to profit! But there is. The promise expressly affirms it. The oath of God declares to every man who hears the gospel, that if he will believe, his faith shall profit him through the expiation of Christ.

That such a foundation, then, is laid in the atonement, we have no less proof than the oath of God. And what fact in the universe was ever supported by better evidence? At any rate, if the promise is true, all men would be pardoned by the atonement should they believe, even if the expiation has not rendered their discharge consistent with the honor of the law. They must be pardoned or the oath of God fails: and if the atonement has not rendered their acquittal consistent with the honor of the law on the supposition of their faith, the plain truth is, that the death of Christ does not support the grant which has been founded on it.

(2) Another argument may be drawn from the universal command to believe, and the punishment of unbelief. What is the faith thus enjoined on every man? A belief that God will be to him "a rewarder," if he diligently seeks him. Heb. 11 : 6. It is a firm persuasion that God will pardon and save him through the atonement and righteousness of Christ if he believes, and that his acquittal and salvation, in such an event, have been rendered consistent with the honor of the law by the sufferings and obedience of his Redeemer. On every man, without waiting for evidence of his election, such a faith is enjoined by the positive command of God. And does God command men to believe a lie? And does he punish them with eternal destruction for not crediting a falsehood?

Upon the top of these two arguments I will bring forward the general confession of the church. That the atonement has reconciled with the honor of the law the pardon of every man if he will believe, is a fact acknowledged in the daily practice of every minister of the gospel. None of us hesitates to say to an assembly of unregenerate men, among whom we always presume there are some of the non-elect, if you will all believe you shall be pardoned through the atonement of Christ; which is to say, that the atonement has reconciled with the honor of the law the pardon of every soul in the assembly, if he will believe. We go to the next assembly, and address them in the same words. And if the whole race of Adam were living at once, not one of us, I suppose, would scruple to say the same to all. And when we take the race in detail, by conversing with individuals in private, we say to the unregenerate as fast as they come, if you will believe you shall be pardoned through the death of Christ; which is to say, the atonement has rendered it consistent with the honor of the law for you in particular to be pardoned if you will believe. And were it possible for the whole race of Adam to pass in succession before us, not one of us would hesitate to say the same to every individual.

If it be alleged that we should thus speak from not knowing who the elect are, I answer, Christ himself, who did know, spoke in the same manner. He said to every one, if thou believe thou shalt be saved. How often, may we suppose, he pronounced this promise with an eye fixed on Judas.

The Synod of Dort, though they ascribe this general influence of the atonement to its sufficiency, everywhere represent that it reconciled with the honor of the law the pardon of every man if he will believe, a thing which they never said of devils. The following is the language of the whole synod. "The proposition that Jesus Christ the Saviour died for all and each, is ambiguous through imperfection. If you add believ-

ers, the proposition will be clear and true; if men, it remains ambiguous: for it can be understood either of the amplitude of the merit of Christ's death, which is in the highest degree sufficient for the reconciliation of all men, or of its efficacy, actually reconciling all men. In the former sense the proposition is indeed true; for the death of Christ, in point of its amplitude and power, is a remedy in the highest degree sufficient to atone for the sins of all men and every man; nor to actual reconciliation is any thing wanting to all and each who receive it by faith. In this sense Christ may be said to have died for all men and every man. And in the same sense the sayings of Scripture, where Christ is said to have died for all (1 Tim. 2: 6), to have tasted death for all (Heb. 2: 9), to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2: 2), *are commonly and not improperly understood*, though they may be taken also in a more restricted sense.* The Synod affirm "that as to the sufficiency of his ransom and merit, Christ *died and willed to die for all and each*:" and they add, "If they [the remonstrants] deny their agreement [with this], how do they not blaspheme the death of the Son of God as an insufficient ransom?"† Now this is all we mean. Christ died and willed to die for all and each, so far as to render their pardon possible and certain, if they would believe; that is, he died and willed to die for all and each as moral agents.

The delegates from Great Britain say, "God, pitying the lapsed human race, sent his Son, who gave himself as the price of redemption for the sins of the whole world. — Christ therefore so died for all men that all and each, faith intervening, can obtain remission of sins and eternal life by virtue of that ransom. — In this merit of Christ's death is founded the universal gospel promise, according to which all who believe in Christ do actually obtain remission of sins and eternal life."‡

The delegates from Hesse say, "About the first proposition [viz. that Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all and each of mankind], we would not contend with any man; since the Sacred Writings expressly say that Christ died for all (but never for each), and is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The true meaning of which phraseology we think to be this: that so great is the worth, power, value, and price of the passion and death of Christ, that it is abundantly sufficient to atone for the sins of all men and every man, as many as have lived, do live, or shall hereafter live. — This passion and death were necessarily of infinite value, insomuch that all and each of mankind, provided only they cleave to Christ by a true faith, will, through or on ac-

* Acts of Synod, Part I. p. 247, 248.

† Ibid. p. 248, 249.

‡ Ibid. Part II. p. 100, 101.

count of his passion and death, be received into the grace and favor of God, and obtain remission of sins, righteousness, and eternal life. Whence the word of the Gospel concerning Christ Jesus crucified is proclaimed to the elect and reprobate respectively, and all are commanded to believe in him, with this promise subjoined, that all who do believe in him shall obtain reconciliation with God, remission of their sins, righteousness, and eternal salvation." "They [the remonstrants] have added this declaration, that Christ by his death procured reconciliation, not for the elect alone,—but also for all other men, and that according to the counsel and decree of the Father; which words are capable of a double meaning. The first is, that it was the counsel and decree of God the Father, that Christ by his passion and death should pay such a ransom, that, in itself considered, it should be of so great worth and power and value, that it should be abundantly sufficient to reconcile all and each of mankind to God.—And in this sense it is true; nor was it ever denied by the doctors of the Reformed Church. For such as the ransom of Christ—in itself is, such God the Father from eternity willed it to be."*

The delegates from the Wetteraw say, "Christ is an expiation for the sins of the whole world, so far as relates to the worth and sufficiency of his ransom." "When Christ is said to have died for all, this can be understood of the sufficiency of the merit, or the magnitude of the price." They quote with approbation from one who says, that "the merit of Christ has an equal bearing on all as to its sufficiency, but not as to its efficacy.—The sufficiency and magnitude of the ransom of Christ, as relates to the reprobate, has a double end; one in itself and the other by accident. The end in itself is, that God may testify that he is not delighted with the perdition of men, seeing he gave his only begotten Son, that every one who believes in him may not perish, but have eternal life. The end by accident is, that by means of its magnitude and sufficiency the reprobate may be without excuse." And they add themselves, "For these perish, not by the fault of Christ, but by their own, since by their own unbelief they reject the benefits of Christ offered in the gospel." "The reprobate are bound to believe this, that the merit of Christ is of so great worth that it is able to profit them also; and it would indeed profit them, if they would believe the gospel and repent."†

Matthias Martinius, one of the delegates from Bremen, says, "There is in God a certain common love to man with which he regarded the whole lapsed human race, and seriously willed the salvation of all. The

* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 114, 116.

† Ibid. p. 125, 126, 128, 129.

exercise of this love to man appears in the outward call to the elect and reprobate without distinction. — In this call are to be distinguished these things: the historical narrative concerning Christ, the command to believe, the interdiction of unbelief, the promise of eternal life made to believers, the threatening of damnation to the unbelieving. And if any one does not believe, the issue of this call is condemnation, and expressly for this reason, because he does not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3: 18.) But this issue in itself is not intended by God, but follows by accident through the fault of man. — Moreover, this outward call — necessarily requires antecedent to itself these things; the promise and mission of the Son (formerly future, now past), and redemption, that is, the payment of a price to atone for sins, and God rendered so placable as to require no other sacrifice for the sins of any man, content with this only most perfect one, and that for the reconciliation of men there be no need of any other satisfaction, any other merit for them, provided (what in remedies must be done) there be an application of this common and salutary medicine. If this redemption is not supposed to be a common blessing bestowed on all men, the indiscriminate and promiscuous preaching of the gospel, committed to the apostles to be exercised among all nations, will have no foundation in truth. But since we abhor to say this, it ought to be seen to how their assertions agree with the most known and lucid principles, who unqualifiedly deny that Christ died for all. Nor here will it be enough to assert such a sufficiency of redemption as could be enough; but it is altogether such as is enough, and such as God and Christ have considered enough. For otherwise the gospel command and promise are destroyed. For how from a benefit, sufficient indeed, but not designed for me by a sincere intention, can the necessity of believing that it belongs to me be deduced? What, then, shall we call this redemption? This redemption is in the new world what creation is in the old: to wit, as the creation of man is not the image of God, but is that foundation without which the image of God could not have place in him; so, also, redemption is no part of the image of God, but is that in which is founded the whole exercise of the prophetic and kingly offices of Christ, and his priestly intercession. But care must be taken not to carry this comparison too far. This redemption is the payment of a price due for us captives, not that we should go forth from captivity at all events, but that we should be able and be bound to go forth; and in fact we should go forth if we would believe in the Redeemer, acknowledge his benefit, and thoroughly become members of him as the Head. And, therefore, upon whatever man we fall, to him we are the messengers and publishers of this salutary grace (saving, however, to believers only), from

the very office of piety and charity." "The Lord even merited grace for all men; but not for all men that grace which depends on particular election. What then? That which is promised on condition of faith. For certainly to all men is promised remission of sins and eternal life if they believe. Here, therefore, it appears that a conditional remission of sins and salvation belong to all, but not a promise to give strength and excite the actions by which that condition is fulfilled. For these things men are bound by the power of a divine command to perform themselves; and they who are not able to do this, are not able through their own fault." "Christ merited the favor of God for all, to be actually obtained if they believe.—This his favor God declares in common in the word of the gospel." "Christ died for all in regard to the merit and sufficiency of the ransom, for believers only in regard to the application and efficacy. In support of which very sentiment many testimonies of the fathers and schoolmen, and more recent doctors of the church, can be cited when there is need." "He who despises the offering of Christ made on the cross loses all the right which he might have had in it, and thereby aggravates damnation to himself:—and the gospel, which in itself is a savor of life unto life, becomes to the unbelieving a savor of death unto death, by accident, through their own fault." Among the propositions which Martinus pronounces false are the following: "Christ died in no sense for them that perish;" and, "The decree of particular election or reprobation of certain persons, cannot consist with the universality of Christ's death." *

Henry Iselburg, another delegate from Bremen, says, "Such is the worth and virtue of the passion, death, and merit of Christ, that, by itself and in its own nature, it is abundantly sufficient to atone for and take away all the sins of all men, and to obtain and confer on all and each, without exception, reconciliation with God, grace, righteousness, and eternal life. And therefore the remedy of sin and death, our Lord Jesus Christ, is proposed and offered by the preaching of the gospel, not to certain persons only, or to those alone who are to be saved, but to the elect and reprobate indiscriminately; and all without distinction are invited to a participation or fruition of it, and to eternal life thereby; and all and each are sincerely and seriously commanded to believe in Christ, to live to him, and to come to the acknowledgment of the truth; and they who do not believe in the name of the Son of God are justly condemned. In this sense Christ is rightly said to have died sufficiently for all, as all who believe in him and seek his aid are able and bound to obtain reconciliation, remission of sins, and the inheritance of eternal

* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 133-139.

life; as the sins of no mortal are so great that the sacrifice of Christ cannot suffice to atone for them; as not one of the human race is alien from him in the same sense and degree that Satan and the evil angels are. And this is the will and intention of God from eternity, that the death of Christ should be sufficient for all in such a sense and degree, that God can require no other sacrifice or satisfaction for the sins of men but that one alone, to atone for every evil (permanent impenitence and the sin against the Holy Ghost excepted); and on the other hand, that he may account and esteem it in the highest degree sufficient to merit every salutary good, and that there may be no need of any other merit for men. Wherefore no one of the reprobate can be condemned and perish for want of the death of Christ, or because there was not in him a sufficient remedy against destruction, but each one through his own fault entirely." *

Ludovicus Crocius, the other delegate from Bremen, says, "So great is the worth, price, power, value, and sufficiency of the death of Christ, that it wants nothing at all to the purpose of meriting, acquiring, and obtaining reconciliation with God and remission of sins for all men and every man. It was the counsel, aim, and intention, not only of God the Father in delivering the Son to death, but of the Son also in dying, to acquire, obtain, and merit, by that most precious death and passion, for all and each of human sinners, that if they repent and believe in Christ when they become capable of instruction, they may be able to be reconciled to God and receive remission of sins. Christ having suffered and died according to his own and his Father's counsel, did by his death and passion merit most sufficiently for all and each of human sinners, that if they only repent and believe, they may be able to be reconciled to God, or be restored to his favor and bosom. This doctrine, as being most true as being agreeable to the Scriptures, to the nature of the thing, to the confession of the church (and the church of Bremen expressly), to the better and more common sentiment of the fathers, and of the theologians both ancient and modern, is necessarily (as I believe) to be uncorruptly and sacredly retained and defended in the church of God, as well for the glory of God (which is so illustrated that his truth in calling, his equity in commanding, his justice in threatening, appear to all who seriously contemplate the Scriptures) as for the edification, growth, and consolation of the called in true faith and piety, and finally, for the salutary avoiding and refutation of divers heresies, which like rocks surround this doctrine." †

The Dutch Professors say, "We confess that the merit and value of

* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 141, 142. † Ibid. p. 150, 151.

the death and satisfaction of Christ is so great, and of so great a price, as well on account of its perfection, as the infinite dignity of his person, that it is not only sufficient to atone for all, even the greatest sins of men, but also to save all the posterity of Adam, though they were many more, provided they embrace it by a true faith. — It is not even to be doubted, that it was the intention of God the Father in delivering his Son, and of Christ in offering himself, that he should pay such and so great a ransom; for whatever Christ accomplished by his death, this he accomplished according to the Father's intention and his own.*

The delegates from the synod of Gelders say, "What is here asserted (that Christ died for all, and that none but believers are actually made partakers of remission), if it is spoken of adults, we believe it with the whole heart; for the Scripture inculcates this so often, and in such express terms, that no one, unless he is manifestly impious, can deny or call it a question. We add, — that the power and worth of the passion of Christ was in itself sufficient to take away the sins of all men and every man."†

The delegates from Friesland, complaining of the unfairness of the remonstrants, say, "Neither does it escape them that the doctrine of the sufficiency of the merit of Christ's death to atone for the sins of all and each of mankind, if all and each would believe, has hitherto been constantly and firmly held and taught in all the Dutch churches, without a dissenting voice. They are not ignorant, moreover, that this distinction has been used in a sound sense by very many of the orthodox, that Christ died for all and each in respect to the sufficiency of the ransom, but for the elect and believers in regard to its efficacy."‡

The delegates from the synod of Groningen and Omlands say, "Here it is to be noted, that the question is not about the sufficiency of Christ's death; for we affirm without hesitation, that the sacrifice of Christ possesses so great power and value, that it is abundantly sufficient to atone for the sins of all men, as well actual as original; and that no one of the reprobate perishes for want of the death of Christ, or through its insufficiency."§

The delegates from the synod of the French Netherlands say, "The price of redemption which Christ offered to his Father, considered in and by itself, is most valuable and sufficient; so that all might be redeemed by the value and worth of Christ's death, if all and each would believe."||

* Acts of Synod, Part III. p. 121.

† Ibid. p. 127.

‡ Ibid. p. 172.

§ Ibid. p. 193.

|| Ibid. p. 210. The author is the more assured of having done justice to the sentiments of the Synod, for having submitted his translation to the classical eye of Samuel Baldwin, Esq., of Newark, an elegant scholar, and to whom he is happy thus publicly to acknowledge himself indebted.

CHAPTER V.

SYNOD OF DORT AGREED WITH US AS TO THE ACTUAL INFLUENCE OF THE ATONEMENT ON THE NON-ELECT, AND THE PURPOSE OF THE SACRED PERSONS.

IN every dispute it goes half-way to settle the question, to know precisely the points in which the parties differ and in which they agree. In the present controversy it is of the last importance to know this, as in the main the parties have certainly been contending for different truths; one filling their eye with the secret purpose of God about the application of the atonement, the other with the influence which the atonement had upon the relations of agents. On the former subject there can be no diversity of opinion among us; and I am happy now to be able to show, that, on the latter subject, in the Calvinistic world at large, there is no dispute.

The synod of Dort was a fair representative of the Calvinistic world one century after the commencement of the Reformation. Their opinions will certainly disclose what the doctrines of the Reformation were, especially as they tell us that their churches had uniformly held the same belief from the beginning. And they must also be considered no contemptible witnesses of the sentiments of the schoolmen and fathers.

In the synod there was not a perfect harmony of opinion, some having more enlarged views than others of the principles of a moral government. It is fair, then, to discriminate between the concessions which came from different sides of the house, and after presenting those which were the highest, to give those which appear to have expressed the views of the synod at large.

Of all the concessions, those of the delegates from Great Britain and Bremen were the most ample. The former say, that God pitied the human race, and sent his Son who gave himself as the price of redemption for the sins of the whole world, and died for all, so that all by believing may be saved. The latter give their opinions separately, but they are agreed in these points: that it was the eternal counsel of God that Christ should die for all in point of the sufficiency of his atonement; and that it should not be such a sufficiency as would have been enough had other circumstances concurred, but such as would actually be enough, and such that no other satisfaction could be demanded of any sinner, provided he would believe. They maintain that no man is alien from Christ in the same sense and degree that devils are, and that none perish for want of a complete expiation. Two of these delegates unite in saying, that it was the counsel of God that Christ should merit a conditional salvation

for all; and affirm that this doctrine was supported by "the better and more common sentiment of the fathers, and theologians ancient and modern," and by "the confession of the church." One of them is still more explicit. He asserts that God loved the whole human race, and seriously willed their salvation; that the price of redemption was actually paid for all, and sincerely intended for all, and that the aggravated misery of those who perish was not in itself designed, but follows by accident through the fault of man (he is speaking in the dialect of a moral government); that had not such a conditional salvation been provided for all, the offer and promise would not have been founded in truth, nor the command reasonable; that to make out all this, it was not necessary that faith should have been procured for all, for this men are bound by a divine command to exercise themselves, and if they cannot it is their own fault; that therefore election and reprobation are not inconsistent with the universality of the atonement; and that the unqualified assertion that Christ did not die for all is one of those propositions which contravene the most known and obvious principles.

But there are two things which the synod assert with a general voice.

(1) That those texts which declare that Christ died for all, "are commonly and not improperly understood" in a literal sense. Some of the middle men, and even some of the strongest advocates for a limited atonement, distinctly support this construction of the texts. The delegates from Hesse say, "About the first proposition [*viz.*, that Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all and each of mankind], we would not contend with any man; since the sacred writings expressly say that Christ died for all (but never for each), and is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world." The delegates from the synod of Gelders say, "What is here asserted (that Christ died for all, and that none but believers are actually made partakers of remission), if it is spoken of adults, we believe it with the whole heart: for the Scripture inculcates this so often, and in such express terms, that no one, unless he is manifestly impious, can deny or call it in question." The delegates from Friesland, complaining of the unfairness of the remonstrants, say, "They are not ignorant, moreover, that this distinction has been used in a sound sense by very many of the orthodox, that Christ died for all and each in respect to the sufficiency of the ransom, but for the elect and believers in regard to its efficacy."

(2) That the atonement was sufficient for all. This they understood to be the real meaning of those texts which speak of a universal expiation. Now every thing depends on ascertaining what the synod meant by this sufficiency. Was it merely a sufficiency of the Victim, which would have been enough had he been offered for all, or a sufficiency of

actual atonement? Was it such a sufficiency as could have been enough, or such as really was enough? Was it such a sufficiency as still left a natural impossibility in the way of the pardon of the non-elect even should they believe, or a sufficiency (even as foreknowledge and the purpose of atonement then stood) which placed remission completely within their reach as moral agents, and made it possible and certain that they would be pardoned if they would believe? The synod shall decide. They affirm with one voice, "that as to the sufficiency of his ransom and merit, Christ died and willed to die *for* all and each." "The death of Christ, in point of its amplitude and power, is a remedy in the highest degree sufficient to atone for the sins of all men and every man; nor to actual reconciliation is any thing wanting to all and each who receive it by faith." It "is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins, of infinite value and worth, abundantly sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world."* Or, as the same idea is amplified by some of the members, "This is the will and intention of God from eternity, that the death of Christ should be sufficient for all in such a sense and degree, that God can require no other sacrifice or satisfaction for the sins of men but that one alone, — and that there may be no need of any other merit for men:" so that none perish "for want of the death of Christ." The delegates from Hesse say, "His passion and death were necessarily of infinite value, insomuch that all and each of mankind, provided only they cleave to Christ by a true faith, will, through or on account of his passion and death, be received into the grace and favor of God." They add, "It was the counsel and decree of God the Father, that Christ by his passion and death should pay such a ransom. — Nor was it ever denied by the doctors of the reformed church." The delegates from the Wetteraw say, "Christ is an expiation for the sins of the whole world so far as relates to the worth and sufficiency of his ransom." The end of this sufficiency in itself considered, say they, is, "that God may testify that he is not delighted with the perdition of men, seeing he gave his only begotten Son, that every one who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life." The Dutch professors give the same account of the sufficiency (which they call the sufficiency of Christ's "satisfaction"), and of the purpose of the Sacred Persons concerning it. The sufficiency is defined in the same manner by the delegates from the synod of Gelders, and by those from the synod of Groningen and Omlands, and by those from the synod of the French Netherlands, and by those from Friesland. The latter affirm that the sufficiency, as thus defined, "has

* Acts of Synod, Part I. p. 289.

hitherto been constantly and firmly held and taught in all the Dutch churches, without a dissenting voice."

Such were the views entertained of the sufficiency of the atonement by the Calvinistic world one century after the commencement of the Reformation, and, if we can trust the uncontradicted testimony of several bodies of delegates, by the reformed church from the beginning, and by the better and larger part of the schoolmen and fathers. According to all these, it was the eternal purpose of the Sacred Persons (to express the divine benevolence towards those who perish), that the death of Christ should possess such a sufficiency as to render it an expiation for the sins of the whole world, and give it such an influence as to make the pardon of all and each possible and certain, if they would believe; that on this account he may be said to have died for all, and that this may be considered the meaning of those texts which speak of a universal atonement. Now this is enough. Such a sufficiency, I fully acknowledge, is competent to support the sincerity of the offer and promise, and the justice of the command and punishment; and, I must be allowed to add, it constitutes a complete and designed atonement for all men as moral agents.

But this is a very different representation from that of the prisoners and the pearl. The points of contrast between the two theories are strongly marked.

(1) The synod say that Christ died and willed to die for all in respect to the sufficiency of his ransom; but the pearl was in no sense paid for all, and nothing in the transaction would justify the use of such an expression. When the synod affirmed that the universal terms found in the Bible might be applied literally, that Christ might truly be called a propitiation "for the sins of the whole world," they could not have had such an image in their mind as that of a pearl paid expressly for a part, and expressly not paid for the rest.

(2) It appeared to be the general voice of the synod, and was expressly affirmed by several bodies of delegates, that this sufficiency of the death of Christ did express, and was intended to express, the divine benevolence towards all. But the payment of the pearl exclusively for the hundred expressed no love for the nine hundred who were excluded; and it is a part of the system connected with this representation, that the atonement was no indication of benevolence to the non-elect.

(3) The sufficiency maintained by the synod is not that which would have been a provision for the pardon of the non-elect had their faith been foreseen, but is a provision which they may now enjoy. It is a sufficiency wholly independent of foreknowledge. It is a sufficiency which is ready for them even while they are known to be non-elect. The delegates from the Wetteraw say, "The reprobate are bound to be-

lieve this, that the merit of Christ is of so great worth that it is able to profit them also; and it would indeed profit them, if they would believe." "The sufficiency and magnitude of the ransom of Christ, as relates to the reprobate, has a double end." Matthias Martinus says, "Nor here will it be enough to assert such a sufficiency of redemption as could be enough; but it is altogether such as is enough, and such as God and Christ have considered enough. For otherwise the gospel command and promise are destroyed." Henry Iselburg says, "No one of the reprobate can be condemned and perish for want of the death of Christ, or because there was not in him a sufficient remedy against destruction." The delegates from the synod of Groningen and Omlands say, "No one of the reprobate perishes for want of the death of Christ, or through its insufficiency." It was plainly the opinion of them all, that the sufficiency changed the relations of the reprobate themselves. But the relations of the nine hundred could not be affected by the value of the pearl, and nothing but an imposition upon their ignorance could lead them to imagine such a change.

(4) The sufficiency maintained by the synod is such that the ransom of Christ "wants nothing at all to the purpose of meriting, acquiring, and obtaining [a conditional] reconciliation with God and remission of sins for all men and every man." It is such that "God can require no other sacrifice or satisfaction for the sins of men but that one alone," and such that there is "no need of any other merit for men." But can all this be said of the pearl? Should the nine hundred accept the offer, would their retainer be bound by the ransom to discharge them? What has bound him? The ransom was not paid for them; nor has he promised to accept it in their behalf. Its value cannot bind him, for the whole was given for the hundred. He certainly would have a right to demand, and would demand, another ransom. If you say he has promised to accept it for the nine hundred in case they will come out, then the ground is changed and the dispute is ended. For then there is a ransom publicly accepted for them as capable agents. And this is all we ask.

(5) The sufficiency which the synod supported is such as places remission within the reach of every man who hears the gospel, and leaves nothing in the way but a wicked heart. This cannot be said of the pearl. It had no influence on the nine hundred at all, except what existed in their own imaginations. It did not bring deliverance within their reach, only in a delusive appearance. It left their escape still as much a natural impossibility as ever. And yet the same respectable writer that makes this representation says to a non-elect man, "It is still true, if you believe you shall be saved. If you believe there is atonement for you." He had lately said, "The death of Christ must expiate our sins before any

way can be opened" for pardon. That non-elect man had been told that Christ did not expiate his sins; and now he is assured that there is an atonement ready for him, if he will receive it. This certainly is what the words import (and what the preaching of the same class of men continually imports), but this was not the meaning of the writer. His meaning was, all who in fact believe will find an atonement. But he ought not to have said to a moral agent whose faith was naturally possible, and acknowledged to be such in the very form of the address, and for whom he knew no expiation had been made (for the man is addressed as non-elect), "If you believe there is atonement for you." If I say to a man from the roof of my house, leap up to me and I will give you a kingdom, I only trifle with him; we understand each other. But if because I know a man is effectually induced to go another way, I say to him, if you will come into my house (an action which is possible), you will find a feast prepared for you, when no feast is provided, I deceive him, and utter a falsehood. It would have been false if the herald had told the nine hundred, you may come out if you please.

On the whole, the sufficiency set forth by the synod was not like the value of a costly pearl expressly not paid for a part of the prisoners, but the sufficiency of a ransom in such a sense offered for all as purposely and expressly to secure pardon to them in case they would believe.

If I rightly understand the synod (and I think I certainly do if they are consistent with themselves), they differed from us in nothing but in identifying the atonement with the higher ransom. Their question was about the united influence of Christ's expiation and merit, which they contemplated under the name of his meritorious death; and the shape of their question was, for whom did he die? meaning, whose salvation did he intend to merit and receive as his reward? And this carried them to the secret purpose of the divine mind, and the private covenant between the Sacred Persons, respecting the application of the atonement. And when they had fastened their eye there, they overlooked the public explanation in which we find the express purpose, together with all the influence which that explanation had to render the death of Christ a complete atonement for a whole world of moral agents. And then they had no way to account for the influence of the atonement upon all but to ascribe it to its sufficiency. But that sufficiency, as they explained it, really constituted all that we mean by a general atonement. In short, had the synod distinguished as we do between expiation and merit, they would have had no dispute with us even in words.

CHAPTER VI.

TESTIMONY OF CALVIN, WATTS, AND OTHERS.

DOCTOR Watts says of Calvin, "that some of the most rigid and narrow limitations of grace to men are found chiefly in his Institutions, which were written in his youth; but his Comments on Scripture were the labors of his riper years and maturer judgment."* With this remark he introduces the following Comments of that distinguished reformer.

Matt. 26 : 28. ["This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."] "Under the name of many he denotes, not a part of the world only, but the whole human race."

1 Cor. 8 : 11, 12. ["Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died."] "If the soul of every weak person was the purchase of the blood of Christ, he that for the sake of a little meat plunges his brother again into death who was redeemed by Christ, shows at how mean a rate he esteems the blood of Christ."

1 John 2 : 2. ["He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."] "Here a question is raised, how the sins of the whole world are atoned for.—Some have said—that Christ suffered for the whole world sufficiently, but for the elect alone efficaciously. This is the common solution of the schools; and though I confess this is a truth, yet I do not think it agrees to this place."

2 Pet. 2 : 1. ["There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."] "Though Christ is denied in various ways, yet in my opinion Peter means the same thing here that Jude expresses, namely, that the grace of God is turned into lasciviousness. For Christ has redeemed us, that he might have a people free from the defilements of the world, and devoted to holiness and innocence. Whosoever, therefore, shake off the yoke and throw themselves into all licentiousness, are justly said to deny Christ, by whom they were redeemed."

Jude 4. ["Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."] "He means that Christ is really denied when those who were redeemed by his blood

* Watts's Works, Vol. VI. p. 287, Note.

again enslave themselves to the devil, and, as far as in them lies, make that incomparable price vain and ineffectual." *

This is decisive as relates to Calvin ; and shows that in his maturer years his opinion was the same as that of the schoolmen and fathers before him, and the same as that of the Calvinistic world a century after.

The seraphic Watts wrote a treatise on purpose to support the very sentiments contained in these sheets. I cannot refrain from presenting a syllabus of his argument in his own words.

I. "It is very hard to vindicate the sincerity of the blessed God or his Son in their universal offers of grace and salvation, and their sending ministers with such messages and invitations to accept of mercy, if there be not such a conditional pardon and salvation provided for them. — It is hard to suppose that the great God, who is truth itself, and sincere and faithful in all his dealings, should call upon dying men to trust in a Saviour for eternal life, when this Saviour has not eternal life intrusted with him to give them if they do repent. It is hard to conceive how the great Governor of the world should be sincere in inviting and requiring sinners who are on the brink of hell to rest themselves on an empty word of invitation, a mere shadow and appearance of support, if there be nothing real to bear them up from those deeps of destruction, nothing but mere words and empty invitations. Can we think that the righteous and holy God would encourage his ministers to call them to lean and rest the weight of their immortal concerns and happiness upon a gospel, a covenant of grace, a Mediator, and his merit and righteousness, etc., all of which are a mere nothing with regard to them, a heap of empty names, an unsupporting void which cannot uphold them? — I think we must cancel all these Scriptures, and deny all offers of grace and salvation made to sinners in general, if Christ procured and provided nothing for them.

II. It is very hard to defend the sincerity of the Spirit of God in awakening the consciences of these persons sometimes who are not elected, and stirring them up to think of receiving the salvation of Christ upon the terms of the gospel, if there be no such salvation conditionally provided for them to receive. —

III. It is equally difficult to vindicate the equity of God as the Judge of all men, in condemning unbelievers, and punishing them eternally for not accepting the offers of pardon, if there was not so much as a conditional pardon provided for them ; and for not resting upon the merit of Christ and receiving his salvation, when there was no such merit

* Watts's Works, Vol. VI. p. 287, 288.

appointed for them to rest upon, nor any such salvation for them to receive. — Can we think that the righteous Judge of the world will merely send words of grace and salvation amongst them, on purpose to make his creatures so much the more miserable, when there is no real grace or salvation contained in those words? —

IV. It is very hard to suppose that when the Word of God, by the general commands, promises, threatenings, given to all men whatsoever, and often repeated therein, represents mankind as in a state of probation, and in the way towards eternal rewards or eternal punishments, according to their behavior in this life; I say, it is hard to suppose that all this should be no real and just representation, but a mere amusement. —

V. This seems to be a fair and easy way to answer several of those texts of Scripture which represent God as the Saviour of all men, &c. — Nor can I see any reason why the strictest Calvinist should be angry that the all-sufficient merit of Christ should overflow so far in its influence as to provide conditional salvation for all mankind, since the elect of God have that certain and absolute salvation which they contend for secured to them by the same merit. —

VI. That all mankind have some conditional salvation provided for them, and some real grace and pardon offered them by a new covenant, appears from this, that all men, both wicked and righteous, or just and unjust, shall be raised from the dead, to give an account of things done in the body, whether good or evil, and to receive rewards or punishments in their body as well as in their souls, according to their improvement or misimprovement of the dispensations under which they have lived. — Now surely this resurrection of all mankind must be built upon the foot of a new covenant given or offered to all mankind, since the old covenant of innocency, or the law of works, appoints eternal life without dying for the obedient, and death without a resurrection for the disobedient. — There was, therefore, doubtless, a general proclamation of pardon and salvation to all mankind — contained in the first promise, or the gospel that was preached to Adam, the first father of mankind: — and this was again preached to all the world by Noah, the second father of mankind: — otherwise, I think, the resurrection would not reach to every man and woman in the world. Let it be considered also that this very resurrection of the bodies of sinful mankind brings with it an additional penalty and misery beyond what the law of innocency threatened. — Now this cannot, with such evident justice, be inflicted upon the non-elect, if they are under no other covenant but that of innocency. — For since the broken law or covenant of works leaves the body under the power of death for ever, we can hardly suppose that the Son of God, the chief Minister of his Father's grace, would provide a resurrection of the body for the break-

ers of that original law, merely to put them to severer punishments and more intense torments than that broken law threatened, if there were not some advantage in the nature of things derived to them from his mediation to balance it. — He will never give them reason to complain that with regard to them he came not to be a Mediator or Saviour, but merely to add to their misery by a resurrection to eternal pain, without any equivalent of hope ; or that he came to expose them to double damnation for refusing his grace, when he had none for them to accept. — ‘ God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.’ —

The doctrine of reprobation, in the most severe and absolute sense of it, stands in such a direct contradiction to all our notions of kindness and love to others, in which the blessed God is set forth as our example, that our reason cannot tell how to receive it. — When, therefore, I hear men talk of the doctrine of reprobation with a special gust and relish, as a favorite article, I cannot but suspect their good temper, and question whether they love their neighbor as they do themselves. —

I would ask leave also in this place to inquire, what great advantages can be derived to religion or Christianity by endeavoring to limit the extent of the death of Christ, and to take away all manner of hopes and prayers and endeavors from the non-elect ? Does the doctrine of election of persons obtain any further confirmation by it ? No, by no means. Their salvation is secured, whatsoever becomes of the rest of mankind, whether they have any hopes or no. — Are the elect any way discouraged by [such a general provision] ? Not in the least. But many persons who are awakened to a sense of sin, and are seeking after Christ for salvation, by this narrow doctrine may be terribly discouraged from receiving his offers of grace, when they are taught to doubt whether there be any grace provided for them, or whether Jesus be appointed to act as their Saviour. It may be the means to drive some persons to despair, when they hear that unless they are elected they may seek after salvation by Christ in vain. — And it may tempt them to begin at the wrong end, and seek to pry into the counsels of God, and inquire after what they can never know, that is, their election of God, before they dare trust in grace or submit to the gospel of Christ. —

Objection I. — But may it not be said here, if there be only an outward sufficiency of salvation provided for the non-elect, by a conditional pardon procured through the death of Christ, — but no inward sufficiency of grace provided, — the event will be infallibly and necessarily the same, — since they of themselves — cannot believe, for by the fall all men — became — dead in sin ?

Answer. — The final event will be the same as if they were under a

natural impossibility, or utter natural impotence. — Yet we must say still that sinners are not under such a real natural impossibility of repenting and believing as though they were naturally blind or dead. — It is plain that these natural faculties, powers, or capacities are not lost by the fall; for if they were, there would be no manner of need or use of any moral means or motives, such as commands, threatenings, promises, exhortations. These would all be impertinent and absurd, for they could have no more influence on sinners than if we command or exhort a blind person to see, or a dead body to rise or move. — All the other impotence and inability therefore in sinners to repent or believe, properly speaking, is but moral. — I grant this inability — has been sometimes called by our divines a natural impotence, because it arises from the original corruption of our nature. — But this spring of it is much better signified — by the name of native impotence, to show that it comes from our birth; and the quality of this impotence is best called moral, being seated chiefly in the will and affections, and not in any want of natural powers or faculties to perform what God requires. — Even in things of common life the cannot sometimes signifies nothing but the will not. Luke 11: 7; ‘Trouble me not, my door is shut, my children are with me in bed, I cannot rise to give thee;’ that is, I will not. — They have natural powers or faculties in them, which if well tried might overcome their native propensity to vice, though they never will do it.* — Let this, then, be constantly maintained: there is a natural inward sufficiency of powers and faculties given to every sinner to hearken to the calls — of — the gospel, though they lie under a moral impotence; and there is an outward sufficiency of provision of pardon in the death of Christ for every one who repents, and accepts the gospel. — And thus much is sufficient to maintain the sincerity of God in his universal offers of grace through Jesus Christ, and his present commands to all men to repent and trust in his mercy, as well as to vindicate his equity in the last great day, when the impenitent and unbelievers shall be condemned. Their death lies at their own doors. — I think this distinction of natural and moral power and impotence will reconcile all the various expressions of Scripture on this subject, both to one another as well as to the reason of things, which can hardly be reconciled any other way.

Objection II. — Since the great God — foreknows they will never ac-

* To show that this distinction of natural and moral inability is not new, I will present the following quotation from Burkitt under Matt. 13: 58, and Mark 6: 5. “[He could there do no mighty work.]” “Christ was unable because they were unwilling: his impotency was occasioned by their infidelity: he did not because he would not.” “Christ had a natural ability to do mighty works there, but no moral ability. — He could not because he would not.”

cept the salvation of Christ, — does not this future certainty of the event lay an effectual bar against their believing? — We inquire also further, can his offers of grace be sincere to persons whom he foresees will certainly reject it?

Answer I. — The mere foreknowledge of any event, without any real influence from the power that knows, does not make the event necessary.

Answer II. — The gospel is never sent — to any people — when God foresees there are none at all that will accept of it. Now in the way of God's government of this world, he deals with mankind as a number of free and moral agents. — God's secret foreknowledge of those who will not accept it is by no means a sufficient reason to prevent — the general offers of his grace to them, because the design of his government is to treat mankind as reasonable and moral agents.

Answer III. — There may be valuable and unknown ends — attained by his sincere forbidding sin to creatures whom he knows resolved to practise it. — The wisdom, holiness, and dignity of his government must be maintained in all the just appearances of it, though sinners will rebel against it; for the honor of divine government, in the authority, wisdom, and holiness of it, is of much more importance than the welfare of ten thousand of his creatures.

Answer IV. — Whether or no we can guess at any of the reasons of God's government or conduct in this thing, yet the matter of fact is certain and beyond all dispute.*

To this powerful testimony of the ethereal Watts, I might add the judgment of most of our standard English Annotators. The following specimens are selected: —

Pool's Continuator. Heb. 2 : 9. ["That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."] "To render sin remissible to all persons, and then salvable, God punishing man's sin in him, and laying on him the iniquities of us all (Isa. 53 : 4-6. 1 John 2 : 2); and so God became propitious and plausible to all; and if we are not saved by it, it is because they do not repent, and believe in him. (2 Cor. 5 : 19-21)."

Burkitt. 1 John 2 : 2. ["He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."] "Christ our Advocate became a propitiation for us, and for the whole race of mankind, for all that lived before us or shall live after us. — There is a virtual sufficiency in the death of Christ for all persons, and an actual efficacy as to all believers. — Our Lord Jesus Christ, suffering death upon the cross for our redemption, did by that one oblation of himself once offered, make a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

* Watts's Works, Vol. VI. p. 283-296.

Henry. 1 Tim. 2: 1-8. ["I exhort therefore that first of all supplications — be made for all men: — for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all."] "One reason why all men are to be prayed for is, because there is one God, and that God bears a good will to all mankind. This one God will have all men to be saved; that is, he desires not the death and destruction of any (Ezek. 33: 11), but the welfare and salvation of all; — and none perish but it is their own fault. (Matt. 23: 37.) — There is one Mediator, and that Mediator gave himself a ransom for all. As the mercy of God extends itself to all his works, so the mediation of Christ extends itself thus far to all the children of men, that he paid a price sufficient for all mankind. He brought mankind to stand upon new terms with God, so as that they are not now under the law as a covenant of works, — but under grace. — He gave himself — a ransom for all, so that all mankind are put in a better condition than that of devils. He died to work out a common salvation. — God hath a good will to the salvation of all; so that it is not so much the want of a will in God to save them, as it is a want of will in themselves to be saved in God's way. Here our blessed Saviour charges the fault: 'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.' (John 5: 40.)" Under 2 Pet. 2: 1, the same commentator says, "He — paid a price sufficient to redeem as many worlds of sinners as there are sinners in the world."

Doddridge. The same passage. "Who indeed wills that all men should be saved and come to the acknowledgment of the truth. — I must confess I have never been satisfied with that interpretation which explains all men here merely as signifying some of all sorts and ranks of men; since I fear it might also be said, on the principles of those who are fondest of this gloss, that he also wills all men to be condemned. — The meaning, therefore, seems to be, that God has made sufficient provision for the salvation of all, and that it is to be considered as the general declaration of his will, that all who know the truth themselves should publish it to all around them. — And one Mediator between God and men, even the man Christ Jesus, who hath not undertaken to plead for this or that nation or party of men alone, but whose kind office in the court of heaven, where he now dwells, extends in some degree to the whole human race, and who refuses not the blessings he has procured to any that with sincerity and humility cast themselves upon him."

Scott. The same passage. "It seems improper to say — that 'all men' signifies 'some of all sorts.' — This provision and appointment has been made and revealed for the common benefit of the human race, —

that all who will may come in this way to the mercy-seat of a pardoning God. — This Mediator therefore gave himself ‘a ransom for all,’ as ‘the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world;’ that by the all-sufficient atonement of his death upon the cross, and the redemption there made, a foundation might be laid for the hopes of sinners all over the earth, and that all who believe might actually be saved by it. — There are but few of those that limit such expressions to ‘some of all sorts,’ who do not allow the all-sufficiency of Christ’s atonement, and admit that all men should be called on to believe in him, and that all who do believe will be saved by him.” Under John 1: 29, the same commentator says, “On this ground any man may come to the throne of grace for all the blessings of salvation; nor does he want any other plea than that ‘Christ has died, yea rather is risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us.’ — This general proposal and declaration of the death of Christ as a common benefit to all throughout the whole world who desire to avail themselves of it, is entirely consistent with a particular purpose of God in making ‘his people willing in the day of his power.’”

The sentiment contained in these quotations, it may be proper to add, has all along been held by the great body of the English divines, not only in the establishment (of which there can be no doubt), but among the Dissenters, the Baxters, the Wattses, the Doddridges, and the like. And it is certainly at the present day the common belief in those two countries where the true church is chiefly found, I mean Great Britain and the United States. At a moment when the millennium is near, and great light is rising on the world, this is found to be the general faith of the purest branches of the church. And if we go abroad to Catholic regions, and even search among all the denominations which bear the Christian name, this will be found to be the belief almost universally associated with the religion of the New Testament.

CHAPTER VII.

ATONEMENT OFFERED AND ACCEPTED EXPRESSLY FOR ALL.

THE fourth proposition in the plan of the argument was, that the atonement was expressly offered and accepted for all as moral agents.

That the atonement was made for all as moral agents, we have the plain evidence of our senses. We see it applied to all as moral agents,

first in the offers and promises, and then in the command and threatenings, and in the punishment of unbelief. It is no longer a question whether the privilege was provided for all, when we see it actually in their hands.

The three propositions which have already been proved, namely, that the death of Christ rendered the pardon of all consistent with the honor of the law in case they should hear the gospel and believe; that in virtue of this general change in the relations of men, pardon is actually made over to all who hear the gospel, so far as it can be made over to moral agents before they have performed their part; and that the benefit is so brought within their reach that they can enjoy it by only doing their duty, and are bound to apply it to themselves; do together make out the truth complete, that an atonement is provided for all as moral agents. The single proposition, that the death of Christ rendered the pardon of all consistent with the honor of the law if they would believe, comprehends the whole. It expresses the entire influence of the atonement (except what relates to the curse of abandonment), and all that any Calvinist on our side ever asserted. How the atonement came to have such an influence upon all, is now the only question that remains. Some ascribe this to its sufficiency, others to the express purpose for which it was offered. Of the former there are two classes. One allow to that sufficiency all that we mean by a general atonement: the other represent it by the value of a pearl expressly not offered for a part; and to give it a greater bearing on non-elect men than devils, they resort to the common world, the common nature, and common law. We take the other ground, and affirm that nothing could have given the atonement such an influence but an express purpose bearing upon all men as moral agents.

I may subject myself to voluntary sufferings to the age of Methuselah, without an express object, and it will never convince the community that the law of the land will be executed upon thieves. But let my friend steal and be bound to the stake: let me at that moment cover his body with my own, and take the stripes avowedly in his stead: and all the spectators are as much convinced that the law will continue to be executed against theft, as though the offender himself had suffered. The pith of the applicability lies in the express purpose. Look again at the case of the prince of Wales. The object of his death was to convince the public that future forgers would die. Had he suffered by his own or another's hand without giving out that he died in the room of any, it would have done nothing at all towards producing this conviction; and the pardon of the criminals, however reclaimed, would have ruined the law as much as though the prince had not suffered.

That express purpose which was necessary to give the atonement such a general bearing, it is not difficult to find. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John 3: 14-17. Here is express purpose enough to answer every purpose. There is no longer any need to resort to the unintelligible notion of sufficiency; here is the express purpose itself reaching to a whole world of moral agents.*

* It is curious to see to what straits, from not attending to this express purpose and its proper influence, men are reduced in accounting for the universal offer. Dr. Gray of Baltimore, with all his talents and learning, has not escaped without difficulty in his *Friend of the Reformation*. He was too enlightened not to see that the offer and promise and command are extended to all, and that to deny the imputability of Christ's righteousness to all would lead to blasphemous consequences. He therefore resorts to the idea, that the imputability does not depend on his representative character; as though he might be the Saviour of those whom he did in no sense represent. Why, then, not of devils? And how after all does Dr. G. justify the offer and command? Why thus: God requires of all the righteousness of the law; Christ's righteousness is the righteousness of the law; therefore God must require all to present the righteousness of Christ; thus establishing a legal identity between the righteousness of Christ and the personal righteousness demanded of us, though he had allowed that we are not one with Christ or with Adam, except in a figurative sense. Besides, why was not this reasoning extended to devils? God requires of them the righteousness of the law (or their present sin is not transgression): Christ's righteousness is the righteousness of the law; therefore he must require devils to present the righteousness of Christ.

After all, Dr. G. is not so much out of the way as it might seem. His mistake arises solely from misapplying the term representation. He supposes Christ to have represented men in the secret covenant, rather than in the open transactions. And yet he has correct ideas of what took place in that secret covenant, making it to be nothing but the yielding of consent on the one part, and the gift of the elect as a reward on the other. So that he really means no more than that the imputability of Christ's righteousness does not depend on men's having been given him as a reward; and he pronounces the opposite sentiment (namely, that the righteousness of Christ is imputable only to the elect), one of the two great sophisms which have corrupted the doctrines of the Reformation. He goes further, and introduces the Son of God as saying to all who hear the gospel, that, by an express agreement with the Father, he through his death has obtained a right to assure them that they shall be saved by his mediation if they will believe. In that agreement with the Father, then, he represented, or transacted for, a whole world of moral agents.

Dr. G. is dealing with Mr. M'Chord because the latter makes representation to be necessary to the imputability of righteousness. But the difference between them is chiefly about words. They mean different things by representation. Mr. M'C.'s theory is, that Christ represented only the church or body of believers (had Dr. G. at-

Sufficiency avail without an express purpose! Was it ever known or heard of that Christ rendered it consistent with the honor of the law for any to be pardoned even by faith without dying as their proper and avowed Substitute? Did you ever read of any influence which he exerted upon the actual or possible pardon of men, but by dying in their stead, "the just for the unjust?" How in any other way could he have such an influence? If a real and acknowledged Substitute was necessary to actual pardon, it was equally necessary to the grant of conditional pardon, if the grant was made in good faith; and if without expressly dying for men he could obtain the one, he could the other, and the whole world might have been discharged without an express atonement.

The pardon of the non-elect possible without an express Substitute! Then they are treated with more indulgence than the chosen themselves. Is it to be believed, that when God would not release his own elect without exacting life for life, he has offered to forgive others without a satisfaction?

Either then Christ expressly atoned for all, or a part could not be pardoned even should they believe, and ought not to be blamed for losing the benefit. There is no avoiding this dilemma, unless some way can be discovered in which he could reconcile with the honor of the law the pardon of a part, on the supposition of their faith, without expressly atoning for them. Can that way be found? This brings us at once to the alleged sufficiency. Could then the dignity and purity of the Victim accomplish this? Let us first suppose that these attributes had nothing to point their influence to non-elect men more than devils. How then could they affect the former more than the latter? None can doubt that

tached the same idea to representation he would have said the same), leaving to all a chance to come in and share in the representation. In this he really makes out a representation of all as moral agents, the very thing that Dr. G. virtually admits; and he plainly concedes all that Dr. G. appears to mean by the representation of the elect. So that the dispute is chiefly about words, and turns on the question, what transactions and influence ought to fall under the name of representation. In one respect Dr. G. has the advantage. Mr. M'C., in allowing none to be represented till they believe, overlooks their previous representation as moral agents, which his own theory implies. Dr. G. turns upon him and says, if Christ is the Head (he makes Head and Representative the same) of none but believers, he has no right to command unbelievers. Let him be the Head and Representative of all as moral agents, and every difficulty vanishes.

Thus these two able writers are struggling together on the borders of truth; and nothing is necessary to bring them together, and to unite them both in perfect accord with us, but to fix their eye on moral agents, and on this public express purpose concerning all men as such. It is pleasant to see with what Christian urbanity these distinguished men treat each other. Mr. M'C. has the generosity to concede to Dr. G. the reputation of possessing the highest literary attainments in our country.

the Son of God was competent to atone for devils, had circumstances given his death a bearing upon them. But the sufficiency of the Victim did not extend to them a sufficiency of actual atonement, rendering their pardon consistent with the honor of the law on the supposition of their return to holiness. It is plain, therefore, that the sufficiency of the Victim could not have this effect on non-elect men, without something to bring it to bear on them as it did not on devils, and making out for them a competency of actual atonement. If there is no other sufficiency for them than that of the Victim, they still stand exactly on the footing of devils; and then they could not be pardoned, even should they believe. Why, then, the offer and command to them, and the condemnation for losing the benefit? What have they to do with a sufficiency which has nothing to do with them?

Take now the other supposition, that the dignity and purity of the Victim were brought to bear on non-elect men as they were not on devils. How was this done? By his taking, it is said, the nature of man, and subjecting himself to the law given to the human race, and dying in a world which they inhabited. And what did all this accomplish? A sufficiency of actual atonement for the non-elect? No; for it is asked, "Why need we contend for an actual atonement for those who never will believe?" A sufficiency then of what? "Of Christ's merit;" and "this sufficiency," it is added, "depends upon the dignity of his person and the greatness of his sufferings." Then it might be sufficient for devils. No; it is not "true, that the merit of Christ can be asserted to be sufficient for devils," for want, it seems, of the three circumstances meeting in their case. Then the "sufficiency" of his "merit" for non-elect men "depends" not merely "upon the dignity of his person and the greatness of his suffering." But what does this sufficiency of merit do for the non-elect? It renders their salvation possible. For in making out that a limited atonement does not place them "in the same condition with devils," it is stated to be one of the points of difference against the latter, that "their salvation is in the nature of things impossible." Here, then, is a sufficiency of merit which renders the salvation of the non-elect possible without any "actual atonement" for them. Salvation possible without an actual atonement! The elect themselves were never thus indulged. But how does the sufficiency of Christ's merit render the salvation of the non-elect possible without an "actual atonement?" Why, just as a ransom paid for one hundred prisoners renders possible the release of nine hundred for whom it was not paid. This is the very simile chosen to illustrate the principle; and it plainly shows that the sufficiency pleaded for by this respectable writer did not render the salvation of the non-elect possible, but left them after all "in

the same condition with devils," with this difference against them, that they are tantalized with offers and promises, and oppressed by commands and threatenings, which they ought never to have received.

Our brethren, while they deny an "actual atonement" for the non-elect, acknowledge that the death of Christ rendered their pardon consistent with the honor of the law if they would believe. And pray what other "actual atonement" was made for Peter? But how do they get this influence out of the death of Christ? They ascribe it to "the dignity of his person and the greatness of his suffering," brought to bear upon the non-elect as they do not upon devils, by the common law, the common world, and common nature, while they are expressly excluded. Let us see whether these three circumstances, without an express purpose, and directly against the express purpose, could produce so mighty an effect.

Could the common law work this wonder? But what is meant by this emphasis laid on a common law? Is it meant that all the transgressions of that law were atoned for in a mass? Then the guilt of the non-elect was expressly expiated. Is it meant that such a satisfaction was made as to prevent the law from being injured, whoever of the human race should be pardoned on their believing? This is exactly what we assert, and then it was expressly made for all men as moral agents. Is it meant that it was offered for those transgressions of the law only which the elect would commit? The question then returns, did an atonement expressly offered for a part of the transgressions of a law, and expressly not offered for the other part, render it consistent with the honor of the law for the excepted transgressions to be pardoned on any terms? Then there was as complete an atonement for the excepted transgressions as for the rest, and the exception was no exception; and as there is essentially but one divine law in the universe, the great law of love (holiness being radically the same in all worlds), what should hinder the sins of devils (who are under the same general law) from sharing an equal influence with the excepted transgressions of men?

Did the common world and nature produce so great a wonder? That is to say, did these render the pardon of some consistent with the honor of the law, on the supposition of their faith, for whom atonement was expressly not made? How could they nullify an express exception and render it no exception? And what particle of proof from the Bible of this omnipotent influence of a common world and nature? Where is the chapter and verse.

In the supposed case of the prince of Wales, besides the ten noblemen, say there were twenty more who had committed the same crime. Keep in mind that the only way in which he could render the pardon of any

consistent with the honor of the law, was by making as strong an impression as their death would have made, that the law was still to be executed on future offenders. Suppose now that the prince expressly offered himself for the ten, and expressly did not offer himself for the twenty; how could his death answer in the room of the punishment of the twenty, or on any conditions render their pardon consistent with the honor of the law? Could his living under the same law that all had broken, and atoning for that species of crime which all had committed, and belonging to the same kingdom, and having the blood of an Englishman in his veins, and the honors of a prince upon his head, make any difference in favor of those who were expressly excluded? Who, after seeing the twenty pardoned for whom he did not die, would conclude that all future forgers would be punished? And if the twenty could not be discharged on any terms, it is not true that his death rendered their pardon consistent with the honor of the law on certain conditions; and the offer to them on those conditions would either be deceptive or a barefaced mockery.

This one decisive fact still rises before us: the three circumstances were all tried upon the elect, and they could not procure pardon for the chosen of God, with all the faith imparted to them, without an atonement expressly offered for them. And it is wonderful if they exerted a more powerful influence upon the non-elect, and brought them into a salvable state, not only without an atonement, but notwithstanding their express exclusion.

But if the three circumstances must be allowed to have the mighty influence pleaded for, then in all fairness they ought to be considered as containing in themselves the express purpose in favor of all. The immaculate and dignified character of the victim could no more affect non-elect men than devils, without some intelligible reference to the former rather than the latter. If the three circumstances contained that reference, and pointed to the human rather than the angelic part so intelligibly that their language is understood on earth (and if not understood, how comes this influence to be so confidently ascribed to them?), then in all reason they ought to be regarded as expressing themselves the universal purpose. If they brought the sacrifice so to bear upon all as to render all men pardonable upon their believing, and did this by indicating a reference to the race at large, then they helped to accomplish an actual and complete atonement for all as moral agents, and wrought this effect by expressly announcing to the world the universal reference.

Thus it seems that nothing could give the atonement such an influence on the race at large as it confessedly had but an express declaration, some way pronounced, that it was so offered and accepted for all as to have

this precise effect, "that whosoever believeth — should not perish." Such a declaration we find in words. And when we have found the very thing that was necessary to give the atonement this effect, why should we look any further, or lose ourselves in unintelligible language about a sufficiency which, without the express purpose, would have amounted to nothing?

Let us now repair to the Scriptures. And here the first thing that strikes us on every page is, that the atonement was expressly accepted for all. This appears as often as we hear the Father tender life to all, and promise with an oath that they shall live on the ground of that satisfaction, provided they believe. This is pledging all that is sacred in him that he has accepted it in behalf of a whole world of moral agents. It is itself the public and formal acceptance.

And when we look for the express and universal purpose of the offering, the evidence is equally decisive. This purpose is found in whatever declares to the world, directly or indirectly, that Christ died to make atonement for all. And what less than this can be meant by the "price" in the hand of a fool which he has no heart to improve? or by the repeated declaration that God "has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live;" that he is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance?" or by the universal call, attended by the proclamation that "all things are ready?" or by the pressure of the command upon all, and the awful punishment of unbelievers? or by the solemn appeal, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" What else can be meant by the "birthright" which all are warned against selling, and which when sold cannot be recovered though sought "carefully with tears?" But you ask for something more direct. What then will satisfy? Do you require an explicit declaration that Christ died for all, even for as many as were dead? "We thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." "We trust in the living God who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe." "I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications — be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority: — for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." We must pray for all because there is a Mediator and a ransom for all, and because God wills all men to be saved. And no one can open his Bible without finding these words put into his mouth: "All

we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Would it satisfy you better to hear it said that he died for each and every one? "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man;" (*υπερ παντος*, for every one). Do you insist on a positive declaration that he atoned for the whole world? "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "The bread of God is he which — giveth life unto the world." "The bread — is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Do you demand a categorical assertion that he died for the identical persons who eventually perish? "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died." "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." "There shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." The prophecy of Caiaphas foretold that Christ should die for the Jewish "nation," the mass of whom went to their place. Prov. 17: 16. Isa. 5: 4. 53: 6. Ezek. 33: 11. Matt. 22: 4. John 1: 29. 6: 33, 51. 11: 50-52. Rom. 14: 15. 1 Cor. 8: 11. 2 Cor. 5: 14, 15. 1 Tim. 2: 1-6. 4: 10. Heb. 2: 9. 12: 16, 17. 2 Pet. 2: 1. 3: 9. 1 John 2: 2.

Forced attempts have been made to explain away the literal and obvious meaning of these texts, leaving the Bible really too uncertain to support any thing. But the Synod of Dort, who spoke the language of the Calvinistic world two centuries ago, allow to them their literal import, and tell us that the same had been the common construction. And indeed, what need of this effort to limit these passages, since in their most universal form they prove no more than that Christ died for all in such a sense as to render their pardon consistent with the honor of the law if they would believe; a position which must be admitted to be true if these texts were out of the Bible?

And now I ask, what proof from Scripture or reason can be set against all this mass of evidence? Reason is silent; but what counteracting testimony can be brought from the Word of God? Not a particle. You may find there the doctrine of election. You may find a seed given to Christ as a personal reward for the merit of his obedience "unto death." You may find notices of the larger ransom, made up of expiation and merit, by which he purchased the sanctification and salvation of the elect. You may find the Redeemer in his work on earth manifesting, even with the consent of the Father, a special reference to the elect as the interest which fell to him as one of the contracting parties;

and may find the completion of their salvation a leading end of his receiving the kingdom. This is all you will find: and all this, if I mistake not, has been shown to be consistent with a general atonement. Is it, then, too much to say, that the whole array of evidence which has been spread over this and the foregoing chapters stands without a scintilla of opposing testimony? that the unnumbered texts which have been quoted, which, with their kindred ones, form the whole texture of divine Revelation, have nothing to weaken their force or limit their universality?

I have heard excellent men say, in answer to every argument which could be urged, I am resolved to abide by the language of Scripture. But I entreat them to consider who it is that abides by the language of Scripture. There is not a text in the Bible which asserts that Christ did not atone for all; but there are many which affirm in the plainest terms that he did. We are under no necessity to put a forced construction on a single passage; but our brethren are obliged to limit the most universal terms. They are grieved that we (as they view the subject) appeal from Scripture to human reasonings; and yet how often, when pressed with some of our plain texts, they will turn and say, I cannot conceive that God should provide salvation for those whom he did not intend to save. This very resort to human reasoning frequently appears to be the strongest bar against their admitting the plain and obvious meaning of the Word of God. I say this with all tenderness, and if I wound a feeling by it, I shall wish that it had been suppressed.

AN APPENDIX.

EXHIBITING

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE.

AND SHOWING

THAT ON THIS GROUND THE CHURCH RECEIVE ALL POSITIVE GOOD:
IN OPPOSITION TO THE THEORY WHICH REPRESENTS
PARDON TO BE THE ONLY BLESSING PROCURED
BY THE REDEEMER.

APPENDIX.

AN opinion has gone forth that Christ procured for us no other benefit than pardon; that besides clearing from the current of blessings those obstructions which sin had thrown upon it, he is in no sense the ground of our positive happiness; and that in respect to sanctification, he only made such a work consistent with the wisdom of God by rendering remission possible. Such a sentiment ought to be subjected to a rigid and solemn scrutiny.

That Christ must have had a reward, and one awarded by law, is just as certain as that he was "made under law," and received a command to die. If the Father assumed the rights of the Godhead, and took the ground of authoritatively requiring the service, he must reward it as a service done to himself. But whatever reward Christ received was for his obedience alone, and not for his sufferings as such. Sufferings viewed by themselves, that is, as uncommanded, could be entitled to nothing. Besides, the law promised no reward to any thing but obedience.

Now if Christ received a reward, it must have consisted in blessings for men. He had no private wants to supply, no selfish propensities to satisfy by a personal and separate good; and without blessings for men he could have had no redeemed kingdom to reign over, not a gift in his hand ever to tender to the human race, and nothing at all to gratify his benevolence.

Our general opinion is, that for his filial obedience he received the inheritance of a Son, and was made "Heir of all things;" and that in the "all things" was comprehended the whole amount of positive good ever intended for a fallen race, or ever to be placed within their reach, including whatever was to be conferred on them sovereignly or in gracious rewards, or offered to them on the condition of their faith. We believe that all these things were given to him as the legal reward of that amazing exhibition of holiness which he made under law, and belong to the general estate which he holds by a mediatorial claim, and were made over to him, not for his own private use, but to be disposed of exactly as they are,—some in sovereign gifts, some in gracious rewards, and some barely offered to capable agents, leaving the issue to be decided by them.

The "gifts" which we suppose he "received for men," may be divided into

two classes: first, regenerating grace for the elect as passive recipients; secondly, the good obtained for moral agents. In the latter class we understand to be comprised whatever he bestows in sovereign gifts fitted to a state of probation which moral agents enjoy, including the enlightening influences of the Spirit on the unregenerate; whatever he imparts to believers in gracious rewards, comprehending their continued sanctification; and whatever he offers to men on the condition of their faith, constituting a provision for moral agents to improve. I shall glance at both classes, but shall dwell chiefly on the latter. And in considering the good obtained for moral agents, though I shall refer occasionally to what he sovereignly bestows, I shall principally attend to that which he offers to men on the condition of their faith, and confers on believers in gracious rewards.

It is no part of our system, that Christ obeyed in our room to supersede the necessity of our obedience, as he suffered in our room to supersede the necessity of our sufferings. The obedience which we owed he was never bound to pay, but only that which was due from him. The obedience which was due from him we never owed, and we still are bound to render that which was demanded of us. He obeyed for himself, and we obey for ourselves.

Nor yet is it any part of our system, that we are rewarded for two things at once (Christ's obedience and our own), but rather that two persons in different senses are rewarded by the same thing. A divine reward is a token of approbation presented as a motive to virtue, and is the recompense of him alone who is therein approved. It may be legal, and it may be gracious. Our obedience, begun late and continuing imperfect, is not entitled to reward by law, but yet is a thing really approved; and, therefore, is fitted to receive, not the legal, but the gracious tokens of approbation. What Christ received was in approbation of his righteousness alone, and was of course a reward to none but himself. The direct act of giving to him, though for the use of those who should be approved, was not itself the approbation of them. But the grant consisted in blessings for our use. When those blessings come from his hands, they are tokens of approbation of none but us. The same blessing, therefore, which to him is the reward of law, is to us the reward of grace. As it issued from Godhead, it was his reward, not ours; as it comes from his hands, it is our reward, not his. Though, therefore, we are blessed for his sake (as without his righteousness to detach the blessings from God they could not have come to us), we are rewarded solely for our own; that is, the benefits as they come from his hands, are to none but us the tokens of approbation presented as motives to virtue.

We may see, therefore, in what sense it can be true that eternal life is granted for Christ's sake alone, and yet is a token of approbation to us, and would not have come to us had we not been approved. As it came out from Godhead according to law, it came for his sake alone; but it was delivered to him, not for his own private use, but for the benefit of those who would obey him. It would not have been a reward nor an honor to Christ to have deposited with him eternal life for those who should remain his enemies; nor would it have comported with the honor of the law to have delivered to him

that blessing for those who should refuse to obey. And this distinction in favor of believers was because they were fit to be approved. While, therefore, the blessing comes out from God on Christ's account, it comes to us as a gracious token of approbation.

But it is said that if Christ is the ground of what believers obtain, they must all receive equally. Not so. It was the very idea of his reward that his disciples should receive according to the interest which they hold in his heart, or in proportion as they love and obey him. The good was dealt out to him with an express understanding that it should go to them according to this rule. The only reward (as relates to the present subject) which he ever desired was that his disciples should receive at his hands the gracious tokens of approbation according to their fitness to be approved. Thus while his merit is the legal ground, their holiness, which constitutes a sort of spiritual capacity, is the measure of their blessedness.

A parent labors for a man and receives his wages in articles of clothing for his children of different ages, which he could not wear himself. It is as much a transaction between him and his employer, and the reward is as much his own, as though it had consisted in money. But he did not fulfil an obligation which belonged to the children, or do a work in their room which they were bound to perform. They were never under obligations to render that service. When he has received the articles, he deals them out to his children according to their ages and character, and gives to none further than they are approved, except what he sovereignly bestows to put them in convenient circumstances to render the service required.

This is the explanation of the system, and now for the proof. The principle which I set up is, that it did not comport with the highest honor of the law for God to issue a single positive good but out of respect to a perfect righteousness. It was as much a principle of the first covenant not to bestow a cup of cold water out of respect to any other than a righteousness perfect for the time the subject had been in existence, as it was that Adam should not be confirmed in happiness without an obedience entire through the period of his probation; for the moment the first sin appeared, the law doomed the transgressor to the loss of all things. The following reasonings, therefore, will as much prove that every particle of positive good ever destined to reach a sinful world was granted as a reward to Christ, as that the blessings were which constitute the reward of believers. The latter, however, I have chiefly in view.

In the two great instances of a government by law which have come to our knowledge, it was a principle to require creatures to obey before they were confirmed in holiness and happiness, and not to confer a covenant claim to immortality but as the reward of a finished righteousness. The inhabitants of heaven were not confirmed at first, for some of them fell; and it was long before we heard of "elect angels." Man was not confirmed at first, and the issue is known to us all. This requisition of obedience as an antecedent to the gift of eternal life was not indeed so absolutely necessary as the punishment of sin without an atonement; but it answered the important purpose of honoring the law. It held this language in the ears of the universe: no creature shall

receive eternal life till he has first done homage to my law. There was indeed no other way of conferring immortality in a governmental form. In any other way it must have been a sovereign gift. On either plan the gift to the possessor and the direct benevolence of God would be the same; but the method chosen had the advantage of showing God's determination to honor his righteous statutes.

This, then, must be considered the settled principle of the divine law. And there was no reason why the principle should be given up under the gospel. No necessity existed for the abandonment; for nothing was easier than to make over to Christ as a legal reward the whole inheritance for the benefit of the "joint-heirs." This indeed was not so necessary as an atonement in the matter of pardon, but it answered all the purposes of the original principle.

Atonement covered sin and placed us back where Adam stood the moment he was created, before he had either obeyed or transgressed. But how is eternal life to reach us? Upon the original principle it must be the reward of a perfect obedience. Well, you say, when all the believer's sin is covered, the imperfection of his obedience is covered also; and that obedience, standing thus spotless, may be rewarded for its own sake. It may indeed without that utter prostration of government which would have resulted from pardon without an atonement, but not without departing from one of the two great principles of the law. These were, to punish sin, and to grant no reward but to a perfect and uninterrupted obedience. But your theory represents God as coming down from this high ground to reward an obedience which possesses neither of these attributes. That its imperfection is covered, only takes away its sin; but it still wants something positive to make it sterling. No covering of imperfection can add to it that standard weight and measure which the law requires. No washing can render it that thing to which the reward was originally promised. If the recompense is dealt out directly to this shrivelled morsel, more than half of the original demand of the law is given up. This is the precise thing that has been overlooked. Because God could daily bestow good on Adam for his own works, it is inferred that he may on believers after their sin is covered; not considering that in the former instance he rewarded a perfect and uninterrupted obedience, and in the latter, would recompense one defective in both of these respects. This would certainly be a very material change in the principles of the divine administration, and a change altogether at the expense of law. It would be an innovation wholly needless, and ought not to be believed without decisive evidence.

But it is said that to suppose God unwilling to reward the obedience of his people after their sin is covered, without calling in the aid of another's righteousness, would militate against his grace and benevolence. But why? If a certain amount of good is dispensed to the ill-deserving, which upon every principle is both benevolent and gracious, why should these qualities be diminished by any respect that may be paid, on account of the honor of the law, to the obedience of Christ? If the law refuses to deliver that good to any but a perfect obedience, and God, to save the honor of the law, contrives to measure it out to Christ, with intent that it shall go through him to sinners, is it not as

great a favor to the ill-deserving as though it had passed directly to them? And is not the benevolence as great at least as though it had rushed to the conclusion without respect to the law? The gift is the same to the sinner, and finds him as ill-deserving, as though it had come in the other way, while the method chosen subserves the further end of honoring a righteous law. The only difference is, that upon one plan the principle of the law is adhered to, on the other it is given up. And why the benevolence or grace should be the greater for selecting the manner most injurious to the law, when no one is benefited by it, would be hard to tell. At any rate, upon this principle grace and benevolence are both excluded from pardon. It is admitted on all hands, that this favor is granted to sinners out of respect to the atonement of Christ: and did any one but an infidel ever dream that the grace or benevolence of pardon was the less on that account? And if, without impairing the benevolence or grace of the gift, remission can be administered on account of the expiation of Christ, why not eternal life on account of his obedience?

Having thus stated the ground on which our principle rests, and cleared off some of the objections, I will now bring forward the proofs that such a principle does exist under the administration of grace. I will first suggest some considerations which appear to have less weight, and then others of a more decisive character.

(1) The plan in question sends us immediately to God for all positive good; not indeed as sinners, for our sin is covered by the atonement, but as having nothing to offer but an imperfect obedience. All that Christ does is to cover the sin of that imperfection, leaving the imperfection still remaining: and after men are thus purged from guilt, with all that defect of positive righteousness they are sent to God without a Mediator for their whole positive salvation. After the sin of withholding ninety degrees of obedience is pardoned, ten degrees are accepted, without a Mediator, where the law demanded a hundred.

(2) This system takes away one half of a Saviour and one half of his praise. According to its representation, Christ procured our release from prison, and secured us against a return to the prison-house, and then left us to make our way through the world alone, to rise to opulence and a throne by our own independent merit, supported by such strength and favored with such mercy as we may obtain from God without a Mediator. We are left to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil without the Captain of the Lord's host, and to conquer, not under his banner, but in a separate warfare. Half of our dependence on Christ is thus taken away; and for all the positive good of both worlds we must rely on our own works, or on the mercy of the pure Godhead. The Redeemer is turned out of one half of our religion, and the whole is left cold and gloomy. We no longer feel that every particle of food, and every article of raiment, was procured by our divine Friend, and turn him off with the frigid acknowledgment that he was the mere antecedent of these gifts. Our common comforts upon this plan are not half so sweet, nor the crown in prospect half so precious. How delightful to view all these things as Christ's, earned by his obedience, and laid up in him for our use.

(3) We have been accustomed to consider Christ the centre of all Bible

truths; but this scheme separates from him the whole action of the Spirit, and every smile and favor of heaven. It separates from him, or attaches to him, but loosely and in a consequential way, the greater part of the Bible. It is a comfortless theory which thus associates with our blessed Redeemer a bare escape from prison, and no positive good, no light, no consolation, no inheritance.

(4) We have been accustomed to suppose that the intercession of Christ is for more than pardon, and have even heard him say, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter." And again, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. — I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. — Sanctify them through thy truth. — Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. — Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." John 14 : 16. 17 : 11–24. This seems to have been more than a prayer of the man, and nothing less than the intercession of the Mediator; for he repeatedly alludes to his mediatorial fidelity, reward, and authority. Now it is apparent that the whole of his intercession must be founded on what he himself has done and suffered; otherwise it would seem to be an unmeaning and useless thing, and merely to import that God needs solicitation as one loath to give. Indeed, as it is made in heaven, we can form no other idea of it than as the silent plea or influence of what he did and suffered on earth. His intercession for pardon we know is founded on his death; for had not this been offered, that could not have been made. By a parity of reason, if he pleads for more than pardon, this part of his intercession must be founded on his positive righteousness. It would seem, therefore, that we must either reject the theory in question, or plainly assert, notwithstanding the quotations which have been made, that Christ intercedes for nothing but pardon.

(5) The church is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and believers are denominated his "seed." The principal idea suggested by these figures is not that they are pardoned on his account, but that they inherit from him or for his sake. A wife or child is not generally pardoned on account of the husband or father, but they uniformly inherit with or from their correlates. I am sensible that these names are applied for other reasons; but so far as they suggest the treatment which believers receive on Christ's account, they point us to the inheritance rather than to pardon.

(6) It would seem reasonable to suppose that all the good which is suspended on faith in Christ, and especially on trust in him, Ps. 2 : 12. Rom. 15 : 12. Eph. 1 : 12, 13, was procured by Christ; and that faith and trust, when they take hold of that offer and promise, rely on him as the Procurer of all that is there engaged: otherwise it is difficult to see how faith and trust in that promise are faith and trust in Christ, any more than in Gabriel or Adam. Are they so called because he procured pardon, and thus opened the way for eternal life to be bestowed without further respect to him? This certainly has the appearance of being far-fetched. To talk of a son's depending on a father for an es-

tate which he is to earn himself or receive as a present from another, merely because the father pays his debt and sets him at liberty to work for himself or apply to another, is manifestly using language in a way calculated to deceive. Are these graces so called merely because they expect to receive from the hands of Christ as God's Distributor? or merely because the promise has been announced by him and his commissioned servants? Upon these principles we might with some reason talk of faith and trust in the "ministering spirits," and in other instruments of promised good (for they are real distributors), and faith and trust in the angels of Bethlehem, and in ministers of the gospel, for they have proclaimed the promises of God.

But it is still more difficult to see upon this plan why eternal life should be promised, and promised exclusively, to a trust in Christ for salvation. I can see a good reason for connecting pardon with a reliance on him for that discharge; but why a trust in the word and agency of a mere instrument should be the all in all in the condition of eternal life,—why a bare Agent, appointed to utter the words and distribute the goods of another, should so fill the whole field of vision, and occupy the place which would seem better to befit the Being who employed him, is not so easy to explain.

That eternal life is promised to faith and trust in Christ, and suspended on no other condition, the Scriptures abundantly teach. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." John 3: 16. 6: 40, 68. 1 Tim. 1: 16.

Now, why is this? According to the common understanding of Christians, it is because the life is in Christ as the Vine, and is derived from him to the branches, and because faith is the very bond which so unites us to him that we can draw life from him. And this accords with the representations of Scripture. "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is *in* his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." This, then, was the reason why faith in Christ was urged, and why eternal life was suspended on it: "This life is *in* his Son." Christ is the fountain of eternal life, and faith is a coming to him for supplies. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Accordingly, the life promised to faith is received through his name. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." John 5: 40. 20: 31. 1 John 5: 11-13.

(7) It would seem strange if Christ was appointed to manage more than his own inheritance,—if more was committed to him for distribution than he received as a reward,—if he gives gifts as a Mediator which as Mediator he did

not procure. I know of no reason why any blessing should come down through him as the channel of conveyance, which was not procured by his own proper influence.

Now he does impart all the good which the church ever receive in this world or the world to come. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." To him is committed the ministration of the Spirit, by which he becomes the Prophet of the world, and diffuses all the light which illumines the minds of men. He is "the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." By the same means he subdues and sanctifies the world. "I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient." "Who by him do believe in God." "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. — That we henceforth be no more children, — but — may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." "There shall come out of Zion a Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." By the same means he imparts strength. "He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "Without me ye can do nothing." By the same means he gives refreshment. "They drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ." By the same means he imparts comfort. "Our consolation — aboundeth by Christ." Not only has he the entire ministration of the Spirit, but he distributes the final reward. "I give unto them eternal life." "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne;" his own reward thus empowering him to reward his disciples. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Matt. 1: 21. 11: 27. John 1: 9. 10: 28. 14: 13. 15: 5. Rom. 11: 26. 15: 18. 1 Cor. 10: 4. 2 Cor. 1: 5. 12: 9. Eph. 4: 7-16. Phil. 4: 13. 1 Pet. 1: 21. Jude 21. Rev. 3: 21.

(8) I draw another argument from what in Scripture is called "the fulness" of Christ, particularly from his fulness of "grace." This fulness is spoken of in the first chapter of John, and again in the Epistle to the Colossians; and in both places it is a plenitude of grace and truth. The passage in John is as follows: "We beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. — And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Let us examine what these two parts of his fulness mean.

[1] His fulness of truth. When it is said that truth came by Christ, we are

to understand, not only that he was the reality of what had been set forth in the shadows of the Old Testament, but that the whole revelation of God was made by him. By the fulness of truth in him, we are to understand three things. First, that he had a perfect knowledge of the mind and will of God; as it is said in the very next verse, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Secondly, that the whole amount of truth belonged to him as his own, and that the Spirit of revelation was his subordinate Agent. "When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself [at his own suggestion], but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. — He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." John 16: 13-15. Thirdly, that the revelation made by him was an ample disclosure of the secrets of the Eternal Mind, sufficient for all the purposes of faith and practice, without any supplement drawn from human reason. "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." John 3: 34. Hence to reach the perfection of revealed knowledge is to "come — come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4: 13. This idea is plainly illustrated in the passage in Colossians, as we shall presently see.

[2] His fulness of grace. By grace is plainly meant all besides truth that "came by Jesus Christ," in contradistinction to the law which "was given by Moses." All grace is asserted to have come by Christ. If, then, it is any grace to bestow the Spirit and eternal life on sinners, these also "came by" him. If it was not so, or if any part of grace was not found in him, how could there be in him a fulness of grace? and how could we read of "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ?" Rom. 15: 29. To talk of a fulness from which we all receive, when there is nothing but a sort of negative influence to prevent punishment, would seem to be an extraordinary dialect. Fulness is altogether a positive term, and imports not barely enough to save us from the deepest poverty and ruin, but an abundance to make us rich. I never hear of the fulness of Christ without having the idea awakened of unlimited stores of positive good laid up in him, from which the whole church are supplied: and then I can see a glorious import in the term, — a meaning too rich and vast to be relinquished till demonstration tears it from me.

This fulness of grace consists of three parts. First, a plenitude of pardon, sufficient for sins, however great or numerous. Secondly, a plenitude of the Spirit, given to Christ without measure; from which fulness we receive "grace for grace," and are "strengthened with might" "according to the riches of his glory." Eph. 3: 16. Thirdly, a plenitude of inheritance. The fulness is particularly marked as being that of "the only begotten of the Father," who gives to all that receive him, "power to become the sons of God," (John 1: 12-14), in other words, "joint-heirs" with him to "the riches of the glory of his inheritance." Eph. 1: 18.

All these ideas are plainly comprehended in the fulness mentioned in Colossians. To that passage let us now direct our attention. "In whom we have

redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God [by whom he is revealed], the First-born of every creature [the Heir of all things], — the Head of the body, the church [the fountain of influence; “the Head,” as it is said in the same passage, “from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God,”] — the First-born from the dead [who not only rose first, but rose to inherit as the eldest Son], that in all things he might have the preëminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell: — whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, [perfect in knowledge, holiness, and justification]; — that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God — and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, [the fulness of truth, competent to furnish a complete revelation]. And this I say lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. — Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, [knowledge is a part of “the fulness of God”];” (Eph. 3 : 19), and ye are complete in him; [so far as instruction is concerned, ye have need of nothing more than “the fulness — of the gospel of Christ.” But this is not all: for as wisdom, love, and power, the sum of the divine perfections, go in to constitute “the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” ye are complete in Christ, not only in point of instruction, but in regard to his influence as King, Heir, Sanctifier, and Deliverer from the bondage both of Jewish ordinances and of Satan. Ye are complete in him], which is the Head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands. — You — hath he quickened, — having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us; — and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly.” Col. i. and ii. These are “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” and “the exceeding riches of — grace — through” him (Eph. 2 : 7. 3 : 8); and they all go in to constitute that fulness of grace and truth which is found in him.

Having suggested these considerations, I now proceed to arguments of a more decisive cast.

I. That which is our righteousness in the sight of God is no other than the righteousness of Christ (Jer. 23 : 6. 33 : 16), and is said to be in Christ (Isa. 45 : 24), to be of Christ (Isa. 54 : 17. 61 : 10), to be by the faith of Christ (Rom. 3 : 22), and is called the righteousness of God, because appointed by him (Rom. 1 : 17. 3 : 21, 22. 10 : 3. 2 Cor. 5 : 21. Phil. 3 : 9). The term is obviously taken from the first covenant, as appears by the frequent comparison between a legal righteousness and this. “Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things shall live by them: but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise.” “If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” “That I may win

Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ" (Rom. 10: 5, 6. Gal. 2: 21. 3: 21. Phil. 3: 8, 9). Now, what ought to be the influence of a righteousness which thus plainly comes in the room of a legal one, and takes its name? Under the first covenant, a righteousness both protected the subject from punishment and entitled him to positive good. If, then, "the Lord our righteousness" does only the former and not the latter, he is but half what a righteousness was under the first covenant (leaving the rest to be supplied by our own works), and the very term in the gospel is sunk down to one half of its original meaning. But who told us that the word is thus changed? If you use a term to-day which I know had a definite meaning yesterday, I am bound to understand it in the same sense, unless you plainly tell me that its import is altered. Where has God told us that righteousness under the gospel means but half what it did under the law? On the contrary, the very nature of the word precludes the possibility of such a change. Righteousness is a term altogether of a positive import. It implies more than a title to be exempted from an ignominious death: it imports the claim of one who is right; who not only has not transgressed, but has done all that was required. A righteous man is something more than a man who is not a malefactor. To say of one that he does not deserve to be executed, would be a poor compliment to a righteous person. We do not talk of the righteousness of a culprit just released from the state prison, because the law has no longer a penal demand against him. And the term has a meaning no less positive in the New Testament. "They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness [certainly something more than avoiding crimes and escaping punishment], have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Rom. 10: 3.) Self-righteousness always means, as it does in this place, a pretended claim, not so much to pardon as to a reward. We read of "the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." (Rom. 4: 6.) But why without works? What have good works to do with pardon? This is only not to impute bad works. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness" (Rom. 10: 4); but is the law nothing but a penalty? and is its whole end answered, so as to make out a righteousness, without fulfilling the precept? Thus we see that the term in the New Testament has not lost its original meaning. If, then, Christ is our righteousness, he must do more than save us from the death of a malefactor, he must be the ground of all the treatment which belongs to the righteous. If his righteousness has the same influence, and answers the same end in the government of God, that the perfect righteousness of men would have done; or if the common expression is true, that believers are treated as righteous on his account; then he is certainly the ground of their title to life. To talk of their being treated as righteous on his account, and to deny that they receive eternal life for his sake, is to say that a personal righteousness would not have entitled them to the rewards of heaven.

But there is no need of further reasoning; it is a plain matter of fact, spread obviously to view on the sacred page, that the same righteousness that procures pardon entitles to eternal life. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is

of the law, that the man which doth those things shall live by them : but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise,—that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved : for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been given by the law [to wit, that righteousness which now gives life].—We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” Noah “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt ; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.—The promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.” “If by one man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundant of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.—That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 4 : 3, 4, 13, 14. 5 : 17–21. 10 : 5, 6, 9, 10. Gal. 3 : 21. 5 : 5. 2 Tim. 4 : 8. Heb. 11 : 7.)

As righteousness signifies merely that which entitles to justification, this argument will really be carried forward in a new form under the following head:—

II. Justification in its whole extent is allowed to be grounded on Christ (Isa. 45 : 24, 25. 53 : 11. Rom. 3 : 20–28. 4 : 25. 5 : 1, 9. 1 Cor. 6 : 11. Tit. 3 : 6, 7) ; but though the term is sometimes used with special reference to pardon (Acts 13 : 39. Rom. 5 : 9), in its larger and more common sense it comprehends a title to eternal life. Some of the passages just quoted plainly show this, particularly that in which the contrast between the first and second Adam is drawn. So do all those which assert that justification is not by works. Pardon not by works! what has pardon to do with works? The mention of works suggests no other idea than that of reward. James, of course, uses the term in the larger sense, when, to prove that a justifying faith is operative, he asserts that we are justified by works, and not by faith only. (James 2 : 14–26.) In the following passages also, the word obviously means the same. “Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again.” “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again [by way of recompense], for our justification; [we sharing in his reward, according to the principle,

"Because I live ye shall live also"]. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. — For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life." "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham [receive all the blessings promised to faith, which are manifestly included in that justification which the Scripture foresaw]. — That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is evident, for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith, but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, — that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. — If the inheritance be of the law it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise. — Is the law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. — The law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. — Ye are all the children [and of course heirs] of God by faith in Christ Jesus. — And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." John 14: 19. Rom. 2: 13. 4: 25. 5: 1, 2, 10. 8: 33, 34. Gal. 3: 8–29. Tit. 3: 7.

If justification is an act or sentence declaring the subject entitled to all the good promised to faith, then it confers a title to eternal life as well as to pardon; for we have seen that both are unchangeably promised to the first act of faith in distinction from all subsequent works. And why should not both titles be embraced under the general name of justification? Ought there not to be a word to express the whole amount of these new claims? Why should an essential part be left without a name? And is not justification a proper word for that purpose? Why is it not? What was its original meaning under the first covenant, from which it is manifestly taken? It there denoted a title to life as well as an acquittal from blame. And why should it not mean the same under the new covenant? What has operated to change its import? The principal force of the word still is, and always must be, positive. To justify a man, plainly signifies to invest him with a claim to be treated as just, and of course to entitle him to all the rewards of well-doing. Under the law it would have given him a claim to the eternal life engaged to obedience; under the gospel it ought to entitle him to the whole amount of blessedness promised to faith. Why should not justification by faith secure all that faith claims by covenant? If the promise does not deceive, the moment a man believes, he becomes entitled to eternal life as well as to pardon. All that good is instantly conferred on faith by the act or sentence of God. If that act or sentence is called justification (and why should it not be?) the question is decided.

Further, justification in the larger sense is expressly grounded on Christ's obedience. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous;" or as it is expressed in the preceding verse, "so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life;" or as it is in the verse still preceding, "much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." Rom. 5: 17-19.

III. Eternal life is declared in the plainest terms to be in, by, and through Christ. "That they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him." "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Unto him that—washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father,—be glory." "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation;—whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." "The riches of the glory of this mystery,—which is Christ in you the hope of glory." "God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the *purchased possession*." "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "The bread of God is he which—giveth life unto the world.—I am that bread of life.—If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.—As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father [that life does not mean preservation from hell], so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." "I am the resurrection and the life." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." "That which was from the beginning,—which we have seen with our eyes,—and our hands have handled of the Word of life; for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and Eternal Life." John 6: 33, 48, 51, 57. 7: 37. 11: 25. 14: 6. Rom. 6: 23. 1 Cor. 1: 30. 15: 19. Eph. 1: 14. Col. 1: 27. 3: 4. 1 Thess. 5: 9, 10. 2 Thess. 2: 13-17. 2 Tim. 2: 10. 1 John 1: 1, 2. 4: 9. 5: 20. Rev. 1: 5, 6. 21: 6.

IV. We are directed to ask for all things, and to render thanks for all things, in the name of Christ. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.—If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." "I have chosen you,—that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name [because he had not yet finished the work which was to constitute his claim]; ask, and ye shall receive, that your

joy may be full. — At that day [after my title is completed], ye shall ask in my name." John 14: 13, 14. 15: 16. 16: 23, 24, 26. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus [by, or from respect to, his authority], giving thanks to God and the Father by him." "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all." "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." Rom. 1: 8. 7: 25. Eph. 3: 21. 5: 20. Col. 3: 17.

To ask in the name of Christ, can mean nothing less than to pray that blessings may be granted for his sake, or out of respect to his merit. To give thanks in the name of Christ, is to thank God for blessings received on his account. To give thanks by or through Christ, is to deliver our tribute into his hands to be presented to the Father, as the ancient priests used to present the thank-offerings and other gifts and sacrifices of the people.

To escape the point blank force of these texts, it has been said, that, in asking for positive blessings in the name of Christ, we are conscious that our guilt stands in the way of our receiving, and our meaning is, that we may be pardoned for his sake, that so the mercies may come directly to us without his further influence. Now this after all would be asking nothing in his name but pardon, and the command as well as our prayers would hold out a false appearance. Had we been directed to recognize over our food and in all our petitions our need of pardon through Christ, that we could have understood; but expressly to tell us to ask all things in his name, in the same unlimited manner in which we are directed to ask pardon in his name, and to mean only the latter, would certainly seem to be an extraordinary mode of directing ignorant creatures.

V. The most decisive as well as complicated argument I have reserved for the last. The Son of God, in reward of his filial obedience, was constituted "Heir of all things," and received an inheritance which comprehended all the blessings which ever come to us.

To exhibit a connected view of this interesting subject, it is necessary to go back to the essential ideas of sonship. Wherever the relation, character, and circumstances of a father and son are perfect, there are three ideas essentially involved in sonship; generation, filial obedience, and inheritance. If the last two are united without the first, as in the case of adoption, the relation is imperfect. If the first and last exist without the second, the character of the son is defective. If the first two are found without the last, the circumstances or character of the father is not good. These three parts go in to constitute the sonship of Christ; and in reference to every one of them he is apparently said to have been begotten. The first is beyond dispute. Luke 1: 35. In respect to the second, as obedience was a vital part of the character of the Priest, and as his ordination to that office was really an appointment to a course of filial obedience, or an introduction to the character and conduct of a Son, that ordination is apparently called his generation. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified

not himself to be made a High-Priest, but [he that ordained him to that office, you would expect to hear; the same thing is expressed in other words; but] he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; as he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Heb. 5: 4-6. Accordingly when he was publicly inducted into the priestly office by baptism and anointing (agreeably to the Mosaic forms), at the moment of receiving the divine unction which constituted him a priest, he was named from heaven the Son of God, beloved because obedient. Matt. 3: 17. The very name involved the idea of obedience. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Heb. 5: 8. As if it had been said, Though he was one whose very nature it was to obey, yet he was perfected in that virtue by the things which he suffered. As to the third, there needs nothing more to support it than a single sentence in Paul's sermon at Antioch in Pisidia: "The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Acts 13: 32, 33. If we turn back to the second Psalm we shall find these words to be the public acknowledgment which God made over the sepulchre, when he raised the sleeping Saviour to the possession and honors of a Son, and set him King upon the holy hill of Zion, and gave him the heathen for his inheritance. This reason for the appellation of Son, and for the expression in the second Psalm, is again recognized by the same apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews: "Being made so much better than the angels as he hath *by inheritance* obtained a more excellent *name* than they: for unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" Heb. 1: 4, 5. Here he is expressly said to have "obtained" the "name" of the "Son" of God "by" the "inheritance" which he received. And in the Epistle to the Philippians it is affirmed, that he was exalted to this name as the reward of his obedience: "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a *name* which is above every name." Phil. 2: 8, 9; to wit, the name of the Son of God. The same reason for the appellation is suggested by Gabriel in his message to Mary: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Luke 1: 32. Accordingly when his glorified state was set forth on Mount Tabor, where God had decked him in the robes prepared for the "Heir of all things," the voice from heaven again pronounced, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 17: 5. And one of the witnesses tells us, "We beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father." John 1: 14. Compared with 2 Pet. 1: 16-18. It is because his obedience "unto death" entitled him to the portion of a Son, and because he arose to possess the inheritance, that the grave is represented as the womb in which he was conceived, and his resurrection as the completion of his generation. He is called "the First-born from the dead," and "the First-begotten of the dead," and is said to have been "declared the Son of God with power—by the resurrection." Rom. 1: 4. Col. 1: 18. Rev. 1: 5. It is by a continu-

ance of the same figure that the "joint-heirs," who inherit in consequence of his having risen to the estate of a Son, are said to have been "begotten — again *unto* a lively hope *by* the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, *to* an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled." 1 Pet. 1 : 3, 4. The same form of speech is used whenever the adoption of believers is spoken of, or whenever they are called the sons of God. These terms (though the latter refers also to their new generation and filial spirit) always allude to their inheritance.

This inheritance was conferred on the Mediator as the reward of that amazing exhibition of holiness which he made under law, in other words, for his obedience "unto death." "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. — This commandment have I received of my Father." "He — became obedient unto death — wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." In that remarkable description of the inheritance of the "Son" and "Heir of all things," which is contained in the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the ground of the whole is stated in these emphatic words: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And it is added, "Consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses. — Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, — but Christ as a Son over his own house." John 10 : 17, 18. Phil. 2 : 8, 9. Heb. 1 : 9. 3 : 1-6. Indeed, the very name of inheritance denotes the estate to be the reward of his filial obedience. He received nothing by birth, but by merit. And what he received by merit and not by birth was called the portion of a Son, not so much in reference to his generation as to his filial obedience. In that filial character, and in the reward which followed, and which hence took the name of inheritance, lie two parts out of three of the whole meaning of Son of God.

What, then, was his inheritance? I will first premise that it comprehended every thing which he received by way of reward. Whatever was bestowed as the recompense of his obedience was granted for his filial obedience, for only as a Son was he bound to obey. And whatever was granted for his filial obedience was the portion of a Son, or his inheritance. If any inheritance was conferred for his filial obedience, why should it not comprise every thing which he received in that way? Why should half of his reward take this name and not the whole? Let it not then be thought that any part of his possession or power (the whole of which was conferred as a reward) belongs to him as a mere distributing Agent, and not as the "Heir of all things;" that any part of what he governs and gives remains undetached from Godhead, ungranted to the Mediator, and passes through him as the mere channel of conveyance. It is all his own inheritance, his own "purchased possession." His dominion itself is only the appendage of heirship; for it belongs to the heir when he comes of age to manage his own estate, to press every thing which he lawfully may into subserviency to it, and to give it to whomsoever he pleases. It was "by" the "inheritance" solely, and not by any dominion distinct from this, that in point of

outward state he was made "better than the angels," and "obtained a more excellent name than they." Heb. 1: 4. It was only as "the First-begotten," or "Heir of all things," that he was exalted to receive the worship of angels. Heb. 1: 6, with verse 2. It was only as "the First-born from the dead," "the First-born of every creature," that in point of outward glory he had "in all things—the preëminence." Col. 1: 15–18. In short, he received nothing into his hands but what he inherited as the "Heir." We may therefore unhesitatingly conclude that his whole reward went into the inheritance, and remains his own property, detached from pure Godhead, held by a mediatorial claim, and placed in a new relation to this world. Accordingly we shall find the different parts of it interchangeably spoken of as an inheritance and as a reward.

Let us now see what that inheritance contains. It comprehends all the nations of the earth, over whom, as an appendage of heirship, he exercises dominion both to save and to destroy. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed; [alluding, as we are expressly told, to the combination of Pilate and Herod, and the rulers and people of Israel, and the Roman soldiers, against Christ].—Acts 4: 25–27. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; [referring, as the Holy Ghost declares, to his resurrection]. Acts 13: 33. Ask of me, and I shall give thee [manifestly by way of reward] the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.—Kiss the Son [the Heir], lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Ps. 2: 1–12.

The inheritance includes all worlds and things through the universe, over which, as lawful Owner, he is appointed to rule. "God—hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things:—who,—when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they: for unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.—Unto the Son [the Heir] he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.—Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.—But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?—For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak: but one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him?—Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under

him, he left nothing that is not put under him [nothing but God himself, as it is said in another place]. 1 Cor. 15 : 24-28. But now we see not yet all things put under him: but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Heb. i. and ii. "He—became obedient unto death:—wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2 : 6-11. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands," said after his resurrection, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And not to him as a mere distributing Agent, but for his own. "All things that the Father hath are *mine*." Matt. 28 : 18. John 13 : 3. 16 : 15. Indeed, all things were expressly made "for him," as "the First-born of every creature," "the First-born from the dead," the "Heir of all things." Col. 1 : 15-18.

In other places all worlds and things are represented as given him for a reward. "For the joy that was set before him" he "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." I will "divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death." Isa. 53 : 12. Rom. 14 : 9. Heb. 12 : 2.

This is a general view of the inheritance. Before I descend to those particulars which will bear more directly on the subject, I will remark here, that he received this general inheritance for the use of the church and the world. There was a special reference to the elect. If he received "power over all flesh," a leading object was, "that he should give eternal life to as many as" God had "given him." If he was "exalted," a principal end was, that he might "be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." John 17 : 2. Acts 5 : 31. Did he obtain the Spirit? it was indeed to call the race at large, and to sanctify and comfort all who would believe; but it was also to regenerate his chosen. Did he obtain dominion over angels? if it was that they might be "ministering spirits" to a world of moral agents, it was in a special sense that they might "minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Heb. 1 : 14. When I say that he received the inheritance for the use of the church, I mean two things: first, that he received it for the unfailing advantage of his elect, whom he had obtained a right to form into a church by sanctifying grace: secondly, that he received it for the benefit of all who would believe, holding it thus as a provision for a whole world of moral agents, and as such offering the benefit of it to all. In both senses it may be said, the Father "raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and—put all things under his feet, and gave him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. 1 : 20-23. In both senses I wish to be understood when I say, if he vanquished

the powers of darkness, it was not in a separate warfare, but in the service of the church, and for her use: if he took possession of heaven, it was "to prepare a place for" his followers. John 14: 2. Even his personal splendors are only the royal robes appended to his regal office, which he holds for the benefit of the church. But a part of the general estate was received, not for the church as such, that is, not to be given in rewards to believers, and offered as such to men, but to be bestowed on the race at large in sovereign gifts fitted to a state of probation.

In proceeding to the particular parts of the inheritance, I shall present them in two general divisions; those which respect the elect distinctively, and those which relate indiscriminately to a world of moral agents.

(1) The elect themselves as a redeemed kingdom, and the regenerating influence by which they are constituted a holy seed, and the sanctifying influence and inheritance by which they are graciously rewarded, all belong to the inheritance and reward of Christ.

The elect themselves, as a holy seed and redeemed kingdom, belong to his inheritance. "Thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon One that is mighty, I have exalted One chosen out of the people. — He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father; [that is, he shall be my Son]. — Also I will make him my First-born [my Heir] higher than the kings of the earth. — His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven." "I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." Ps. 2: 8. 89: 3-37. The elect belong to his reward. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Isa. 53: 10, 11. Gal. 4: 28. The regenerating influence by which they are constituted a holy seed belongs to his reward. Hence they are said to be created and begotten "in Christ," and to be regenerated for his sake. God has "saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." 1 Cor. 4: 15. 2 Cor. 5: 17. Eph. 2: 10. Tit. 3: 5, 6. Indeed, the Heir himself, as an essential right, received uncontrolled power to raise them from the death of sin. "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. — For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself." John 5: 21, 26. Both the influence by which they are regenerated, and the sanctifying influence by which they are graciously rewarded, belong to his promised recompense. What else can be meant by our being "chosen — in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love?" God has "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began;" that is, made over to Christ for us. Eph. 1: 4. 2 Tim. 1: 8, 9. We are distinctly taught that he obtained their complete sanctification as the reward of his obedience "unto death." He "loved the church

and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." "For their sakes I sanctify myself [devote myself to die], that they also might be sanctified through the truth." John 17: 19. Gal. 1: 4. Eph. 5: 25-27. Tit. 2: 14. The inheritance also, which they receive as a gracious recompense, is a part of his promised reward. What else can be meant by the eternal election of men in him to the inheritance? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world; — having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." "Paul, — an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, — in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began." Promised to whom? To Christ unquestionably. Eph. 1: 3-5. Tit. 1: 1, 2.

(2) Passing by the special notices of the elect, I say in general, that all the positive good (including expressly sanctification and eternal life) which is offered and promised to men on the condition of their faith (constituting a complete provision for a world of moral agents), and actually bestowed on believers in gracious rewards, is comprehended in the inheritance of Christ.

The general administration of the Spirit, for the sanctification of all who will believe, belongs both to his inheritance and reward. First, it belongs to his inheritance. "When he the Spirit of truth is come, — he shall not speak of himself [at his own suggestion], but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak. — He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." The grant was made to him as the beloved Son and Heir. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him; the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." John 3: 34, 35. 16: 13-15. Secondly, it belongs to his promised reward. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." This gift could not be bestowed till Christ had earned his reward. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But when he "ascended on high," among other gifts for men he received this, "that the Lord God might dwell among them;" and within ten days he sent the blessing forth. On that occasion Peter was instructed to make the following explanation: "Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." Ps. 68: 18. John 7: 39. 16: 7. Acts 2: 33. Accordingly, the sanctification offered and granted to men is everywhere ascribed to the essential influence of Christ. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "This is he that came by water and blood." "The grace of God

which is given you by Jesus Christ." "Filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ." We are said to be sanctified, built up, and established "in Christ," and to conquer in and through him. We are said to be "dead with" him, to be "quickened together with him," to be "risen with him," "that the life — of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." We are said to "know — the power of his resurrection," to be "dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God," and to be "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ is set forth as the all in all in the cure of our spiritual maladies, and in the support of our spiritual life; as being not merely the channel through which the streams flow, but the source itself. The cures which he wrought in the days of his flesh exhibit him, not as an under physician dealing out the medicines of another, but as the healing fountain. Is no other idea to be awakened in our minds by all those affecting representations of him as the olive-tree constantly shedding its oil to feed the lamps, as the good olive and vine nourishing the branches, as "the Head by which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God," but that he is the mere Agent to dispense supplies which might have come through another hand? He is a "quickening Spirit," not merely as King, but as "the last Adam:" and sanctification is Christ within us, not merely his image, but his life: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "Know ye not — that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?" "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Christ is "the Author and Finisher of our faith;" and it is he who pronounces, "Behold I make all things new." Zech. 4: 2-14. John 15: 1-6. Rom. 6: 2-11. 7: 4. 8: 2, 10, 37. 11: 17. 12: 5. 1 Cor. 1: 2, 4. 6: 15. 12: 12-27. 15: 45, 57. 2 Cor. 1: 21. 2: 14. 4: 10, 11. 13: 5. Gal. 2: 20. Eph. 2: 20-22. 4: 15, 16. 5: 30. Phil. 1: 11. 3: 10. Col. 2: 7, 11-13, 19. Heb. 12: 2. 1 John 5: 6. Rev. 21: 5.

In like manner that eternal life or inheritance which he offers to a world of moral agents, and bestows on believers as a gracious reward, belongs to his own inheritance. We inherit through him. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." The last clause shows what is always meant by a son of God. In Christ as the Second Adam, and not merely by his Kingly power, the believing dead will be raised to immortal life. "For since by man [by the sin of one man] came death, by man [by the righteousness of one man] came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, *even so in Christ* shall all be made alive." John 1: 12. 1 Cor. 15: 21, 22. Gal. 4: 4-7. Eph. 1: 11. Thus he who is the Alpha is the Omega also of our salvation.

Accordingly, all the promises which are offered to the world and applied

to believers, expressly including those of the Spirit and of the inheritance were really made to Christ, and reach us as the oil on Aaron's head did the skirts of his garments. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, — that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith [that is, as a reward]. — Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises [all the promises] made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of One, And to thy seed, *which is Christ*. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ [this shows what is meant by promises made in Christ], the law — cannot disannul. — For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise [of the whole inheritance] was made. — The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. [This shows what is meant by a promise inherited by faith in the Redeemer]. — The law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster [no longer minors incapable of the inheritance conferred in justification]; for ye are all the children [heirs] of God by faith in Christ Jesus. — And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed [as being the seed of Abraham's greater Son], and heirs according to the promise. Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all." Hence the promise of inheritance, and all other promises are *in Christ*. "The mystery of Christ — is now revealed, — that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs [with the Jews], — and partakers of his promise in Christ." "The promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." "For *all* the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen." 2 Cor. 1: 20. Gal. 3: 13–29. 4: 1. Eph. 3: 4–6. 2 Tim. 1: 1.

Now the promises made to Christ, either in the covenant of redemption or in the revelation to the church, implied nothing less than that the things promised were to be the reward of his work on earth, and what his services might fairly claim. I can conceive of but two other grounds on which they can be supposed to have been made to him. First, a guardian may receive promises that his wards shall be endowed, not for his sake, but their own. Secondly, a parent may be made acquainted with a similar design respecting his children, and though the estate is to be conferred for their conduct alone, yet the information may be given as a real reward to him. Neither of these cases illustrates the subject. As to the former, if the promises were not intended as a reward to Christ, but only deposited with him as the guardian of his people, why were they made to him before the foundation of the world? * The church were not there to enjoy the pledge, and when the intelligence reaches them, it makes them no more assured than the simple purpose of the Father

* We have seen that the promises of the covenant of redemption were not limited to the elect, but extended to a world of moral agents, securing to Christ the salvation of all who would believe.

would have done. As to the latter, if the promises were intended as a reward to Christ, the recompense could not lie in the pleasure of receiving new information. The second person in the Trinity needed not to be informed. Indeed, what can be understood by a promise in the divine cabinet? Not a declaration in words, and yet something more than a mere design. It was a purpose connected with a bond; a bond not arising out of the intention itself, as out of the verbal promise of a man, but from the very service which the Son was to render. It was a mere recognition of the claim which his work on earth would create, and an unchangeable resolution to satisfy it; a claim not originally binding on the Father, but growing out of the acceptance of the Son's submission. And as to the promises which appear in the public revelation, why should they be made to Christ at all, and not to the church directly, if they were not intended to announce to the world that the things promised come to us as his reward?

On what other ground can you account for the absolute form of the promises, insuring to every believer continued sanctification and eternal life? Is it because those believers were elected? But the same absolute covenant is tendered to the world at large. Every man, elect or non-elect, is assured that if he will once believe, he shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Now, why is this? Why if Christ is not the ground of the promises, and if it is not secured to him, without reference to election, that no member shall ever be torn from his bleeding side,—that no moral agent who will once believe in him shall ever perish? Why, unless it has been promised of him as the "First-born" and Heir, "If his children forsake my law and walk not in my judgment,—then will I visit their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail?" Ps. 89: 27–33. If after removing our guilt, Christ has left us exactly where Adam stood the moment he was created,—to transact directly with God, and receive only what we can earn; why this "everlasting consolation" (2 Thess. 2: 16) to us more than to Adam? Mere freedom from guilt in the gospel sense creates no more necessity that men should be kept from falling away, than original innocence did. Whence, then, this "better covenant,—established upon better promises?" these "exceeding great and precious promises" by which we become "partakers of the divine nature," and are assured of "all things that pertain unto life and godliness?" Heb. 8: 6. 2 Pet. 1: 3, 4. If the influence of Christ ends with pardon, and believers stand before God in the same relation that Adam did, why this pledge against apostasy? Do you say that Christ procured their eternal pardon? What, without procuring their sanctification? We have seen that he could not even render their pardon possible but on the supposition of their being holy. If, then, he did not obtain their sanctification, he could not obtain absolute pardon for them a moment, and created no reason why God should issue absolute promises either of sanctification or eternal life. Why, then, were they issued? We have been accustomed to suppose that it was because the salvation of believers was made over to Christ as his reward. No such thing upon this plan, and we are left to

account for this wonderful change in the treatment of spotless creatures, without any reasons drawn from a Mediator. Tell me, then, in what sense he is "the Mediator" of this "better covenant, — established upon better promises?" Heb. 8: 6. If he did nothing but render sanctification and pardon consistent with the honor of the law, and had no influence in obtaining these absolute promises, how is he the Mediator of a better covenant than the conditional one at Sinai? for this is the thing asserted. How in any other sense than as the mere Promulgator? The argument of the apostle is, that Christ has "obtained a more excellent ministry" than the Levitical priests, "by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant" than that at Sinai. The superiority of the covenant is explained to consist in its absolute form, insuring both sanctification and eternal life. The Sinai covenant, to which were appended all the bloody sacrifices, certainly secured the pardon of every one who would believe, and secured it through the atonement of a Saviour to come. If in this new and absolute covenant the Mediator has no higher influence, that is, no influence to make the covenant absolute, his "more excellent ministry" turns out to be the mere promulgation of "better promises," which he had no hand in procuring. And then, if an angel had been sent to announce these absolute promises (allowing any reason for their being made), he would in as high a sense have exercised this "more excellent ministry," and been "the mediator" of every thing in this "better covenant" which distinguished it from that at Sinai.

Now if all the positive good ever promised to the world on the condition of their faith was really measured out to Christ as his reward, and expressly for the use of those who would believe, then it comes to them because it was first given to him. And this is his own account of the matter. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they all may be one as we are; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know—that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me," John 17: 22–26. The whole amount is this: he earned the inheritance, and his seed share it with him. By whatever means it happens, all things are actually made over to them by covenant. Now on what ground do they claim? and are not the "all things" which are given to them the identical "all things" which were made over to the universal "Heir?" If so, how came they in possession of the very things which were given to Christ? Are there conflicting claims? or do they inherit under him? Let the word of God decide. "All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3: 21–23. Hence the seed "*inherit* all things." Rev. 21: 7. In particular they inherit the promises of eternal life. "Followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, — he swore by himself: — wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: — which hope — entereth into that within the vail [takes hold of heaven], whither the Forerunner is *for us* entered, even Jesus, made a High-Priest forever." Heb. 6: 12–20. That is, he has

entered upon the inheritance as our Forerunner, to take possession of it for our use, and by his priestly intercession to obtain the acknowledgment of our title to it as joint-heirs : and the hope which follows him thither is grounded on the promise of inheritance made to Abraham and his seed, which seed was Christ. As the ancient church inherited from Abraham the land of Canaan, Gen. 15 : 7. Ps. 37 : 29, 34. 105 : 11 ; the type of heaven, Isa. 60 : 21 ; so we "inherit" from Christ the "better country," as "heirs together of the grace of life," "heirs according to the hope of eternal life," Matt. 19 : 29. 25 : 34. Mark 10 : 17. Tit. 3 : 7. 1 Pet. 3 : 7 ; and are said to have an "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ," and to reign "with" him, and even to be "partakers of Christ." Eph. 5 : 5. Heb. 3 : 14. Rev. 3 : 21. 20 : 4, 6. Hence in that great description of the inheritance of the "Son," and "Heir of all things," in the first chapter of Hebrews, we read of the "heirs ;" the meaning of which is found in this, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs, with Christ." Rom. 8 : 14-17. Heb. 1 : 14. At one time he is the Parent from whom the seed inherit, at another time, "the First-born among many brethren," — really the "Heir," but admitting his younger brethren to share with him. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the First-born among many brethren." Rom. 8 : 29.

It might be expected, therefore, that every thing would be ascribed to his essential influence. And so we find it. "In" and "through him we — have — access — unto the Father," — "boldness and access with confidence." We are "complete in him," "perfect in Christ," "approved in Christ," "accepted in the Beloved" (that is, because he is beloved) ; and our acceptableness is called "a sweet savor of Christ," he, and not our works, being the acceptable incense. Even common blessings come to us through him ; and to rejoice in them religiously is to rejoice in Christ. "That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again." Those salutations at the beginning and end of the Epistles, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," "Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ ;" were breathings of desire for all good on those addressed, and acknowledgments that all good came through the Redeemer. Hence that confidence of the apostle, "My God shall supply all your need — by Christ Jesus ;" and that devout and comprehensive acknowledgment, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him ; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, *by whom are all things, and we by him.*" Rom. 16 : 20. 1 Cor. 8 : 6. 2 Cor. 2 : 15. Eph. 5 : 2. Phil. 4 : 18. Eph. 1 : 6. 2 : 18. 3 : 12. Phil. 1 : 26. 4 : 19. Col. 1 : 28. 2 : 10. 2 Pet. 1 : 2-4.

And now, is it too much to say of the scheme against which these arguments are arrayed, that it takes away one half of a Saviour and one half of his praise ? Nor is it the least important part that it filches from us, so far as our comfort and gratitude to Christ are concerned. To fill the eye with him as the "Heir of all things," "The First-born among many brethren," who has taken possession of the inheritance in our name, to manage it as our Guardian, and to reserve it for us against our arrival ; to view every comfort, every morsel of

daily food, as purchased by him, and as belonging to the mediatorial estate ; is one of the sweetest and sublimest contemplations that ever occupied the Christian mind. To know that we are indebted to him for all things is the richest ingredient in prosperity, and the brightest gem in the immortal crown. Do you tell me that it is no matter whether blessings come through Christ, or directly from the Father, as upon either plan they are equally secure ? This is precisely the Socinian plea. The worst evil in the Unitarian heresy is its tendency to lower down the influence of Christ in the business of man's salvation, and to send a fallen race immediately to God. Exactly in proportion as Christ is excluded, our faith, dependence, gratitude, and all our religion, is changed. If Socinianism changes it entirely, this error changes it in part. Give me a religion which yields to Christ all his influence and all his honors, which in every part of salvation makes him our **ALL IN ALL**.

AN
E S S A Y
ON THE
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT:
SHOWING
ITS NATURE, ITS NECESSITY, AND ITS EXTENT.

BY
CALEB BURGE, A.M.

P R E F A C E .

THE following Essay was originally composed without any design or thought of its future publication. The writer was induced to undertake the investigation merely by a hope of obviating certain difficulties, which had hitherto existed in his own mind, whenever he contemplated the doctrine of atonement. These difficulties appeared, on examination, to have arisen, chiefly, from an incorrect, or at least an *indefinite*, apprehension of the meaning of certain metaphorical language, which is generally used in discussions on this subject. This circumstance is mentioned as some apology for an attempt to exclude the use of such language from the following work.

Perhaps it may be thought, as the writer undertook the work merely with the hope of removing difficulties from his own mind, it would have been better, if he had remained satisfied with the attainment of that object. So the writer thought, and so would he have done, had it not been for the advice of those in whose judgment he has more confidence than in his own.

The work is now offered to the public, not with an expectation of meeting the approbation of those whose prejudices are already enlisted for the support of a different theory; nor with much hope of instructing those who have viewed the subject through a confused medium so long that they have at length become *satisfied* with mere *general notions* and *indefinite ideas*; but, with a hope of affording aid to *common Christians*, who, though humble and candid, are still anxious to increase their knowledge on those subjects, which “the angels desire to look into.”

If the reader should find any thing in the following pages concerning the correctness of which he entertains doubts, he is requested, as well for his own sake as that of the Author, to refer it to the Bible in preference to any other authority, as a correct standard of religious sentiments.

THE AUTHOR.

GLASTENBURY, April, 1822.

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AN ESSAY

ON THE

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE SUBJECT INTRODUCED.

THE doctrine of atonement for sin, by Jesus Christ, is unquestionably of primary importance in the gospel system. It is the foundation of all the doctrines of divine revelation which respect the salvation of mankind: the grand pillar on which they are supported. If this fall, these other doctrines must fall with it; but if this stand, the gates of hell cannot prevail against them. It is not improbable, that a conviction of this truth has been a principal cause of that peculiar opposition which wicked men have ever made to this doctrine. Christ crucified was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, in the apostolic age; nor has the offence of the cross ceased. Wicked men still feel the same opposition to this fundamental doctrine. It is probable, however, that a view of other doctrines, which necessarily result from this, is a principal occasion of this opposition. It is easy to perceive, that an infinitely wise God would never become "manifest in the flesh," unless it were for the performance of some vastly important work, to accomplish which, the absolute perfection of a God was requisite. And it must also be perceived, that if none other than a being of infinite perfection could take away sin, or make such an atonement for it as would render it consistent for God to pardon sinners, it must clearly follow, that sin is an infinite evil; and if sin be an infinite evil, then sinners deserve endless punishment; and if they deserve endless punishment, and neglect to embrace Jesus Christ, as the gospel requires, then this punishment must be inflicted. But these are truths which the wicked are unwilling to admit.

To get rid of them, some have denied the divinity of the Saviour, and others have rejected the whole system of revealed religion.

Mankind, having by nature a strong attachment to their own works, are unwilling to consider their own righteousness as filthy rags, and come to an Almighty Saviour for pardon. Hence they are under a strong temptation to believe, that the Son of God, instead of coming into the world to make atonement for sin, and open a way of salvation for sinners, came merely to bear witness to the truth, obey the divine law, show that it is good, and capable of being obeyed by man, set a good example, and encourage creatures "to do and live." While it is much to be feared that many have deceived themselves on this subject by yielding to the feelings of a carnal mind, which is "enmity against God," charity hopeth, that much of the diversity of opinion, which has obtained among professing Christians, may be owing to causes less criminal.

Whether atonement was, in the nature of things, necessary, in order that sinners might be pardoned, or whether it was necessary only because God was pleased to require it; that is, whether God might not have pardoned sinners without an atonement, or any sort of conditions, and without injuring his character, or the interests of his kingdom, if this had pleased him; and if not, what were the reasons which rendered such a procedure improper; whether the atonement, which Christ made, consisted in his obedience, or in his sufferings, or in both united; whether it was made for all mankind, or for the elect only; whether it is, or is not, of the nature of the payment of a debt; whether the sufferings of Christ were the very penalty of the divine law, or, rather, a substitute for the execution of that penalty; and whether the righteousness of Christ must be imputed to believers, that they may be justified and saved, are inquiries which frequently arise among professing Christians. They are inquiries too, concerning which correct information is highly desirable. The Scriptures are the only source from which such information can be derived. By them we are taught for what purpose Christ came into the world, and also what he has done for the accomplishment of that purpose.

Hence if the plain instructions of the Scriptures are kept in view, it is believed, a satisfactory solution of all such questions may be obtained. Let those Scriptures, then, which speak in plain and simple language of Christ's coming into the world, of the object he came to accomplish, and of what he did and suffered for the attainment of that object, be first examined; and let these be the standard by which to construe those other parts of Scripture which represent this subject in metaphorical language, or in rites and ceremonies, which are merely typical.

The necessity of some atonement, in order that sinners may be con-

sistently pardoned, is sufficiently evident from the event of Christ's incarnation and death. For no one can rationally suppose, that the Son of God would have left the bosom of the Father, and the glory which he had with him before the world was, to take on him the form of a servant in this world, and subject himself to the pains and sorrows incident to human life, if such humiliation had not been indispensably necessary, in order that the purposes of grace, in the salvation of sinners, might be answered. Nor is it supposable that he would have died, in an ignominious manner, on the cross, if such a death could have been dispensed with consistently with such purposes. He earnestly prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt!" And considering that the Father heareth him always, it is inconceivable why this petition was not granted, if, indeed, it had been possible; and the designs of God, in the salvation of sinners, could still have been accomplished.

We have, however, more direct evidence concerning this matter. The Scriptures speak of the necessity of atonement in language too plain to be misunderstood. — "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. 9: 22. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3: 11. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4: 12. Our Lord himself, speaking of his sufferings and death, taught that it was what must be, that he ought to suffer, and that it behooved him to suffer. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." John 3: 14. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Luke 24: 25, 26. "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day." Luke 24: 46.

These plain declarations of Scripture cannot be easily reconciled with the idea that the bare repentance of a transgressor must be available with an infinitely holy God, to procure his pardon. Nor can it be any more easy to reconcile this idea with the commonly received opinion of rectoral goodness, drawn from the judicious conduct of temporal princes, in dispensing pardons and inflicting punishments. Should it be allowed, that repentance and reformation place sinners in the most fit state to receive pardon, and that God is ever disposed to bestow pardon on those who are qualified to receive it, still it would by no means follow, that repentance, however sincere, would, of itself, secure to its subjects divine forgiveness. For many things, in themselves considered, may be desirable, in the view of the Divine Being, which, when viewed in relation to other things, he cannot desire. If sin could be considered as injurious to

God, in a private capacity only, we might, indeed, conclude, that since he is infinitely benevolent, he would readily pardon the penitent. Our confidence in this conclusion would receive support from the rule prescribed for our conduct in cases of private offence. "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." But let sin be considered as committed against God, not in a private, but in a public capacity, as the Governor of the universe, and, certainly, no such conclusion can be fairly drawn.

A benevolent individual might grant an immediate and unconditional pardon of an offence which had been privately committed, in a case where only the offender and himself were concerned; while, at the same time, if he sustained the character of a public magistrate, the same benevolence might lead him to withhold pardon from a criminal, although he should have full evidence of his repentance. If he viewed immorality as a disorder tending to the corruption and ruin of his subjects, his benevolence would, above all things, lead him to adopt the most effectual measures to prevent the evil. — Hence he might behold a criminal, in the exercise of unfeigned repentance, in the most fit state to receive pardon; and he might even acknowledge that the penitent criminal, so far as it respected himself, being truly penitent, was qualified to receive forgiveness; he might feel benevolence towards him, and a strong disposition to pardon him; and yet this very benevolence might lead him to inflict the deserved punishment. If he believed that granting pardon, even to the penitent, would give encouragement to transgression, by leading his subjects to entertain a light opinion of the wickedness of transgression, he would withhold his pardon. For his benevolence would no more allow him to exceed the bounds of wisdom in granting pardon, than it would the bounds of justice, in executing punishment. Accordingly, all temporal princes and governors, who have professed a regard for the public good, have ever deemed it necessary to qualify and guard their pardons in such a manner as in their judgment was calculated to extirpate a spirit of disorder, and promote a spirit of loyalty and obedience among their subjects. Indeed, it is the united voice of the civilized world, that it would be unwise and unsafe to dispense pardon in any other way.

It must be evident, therefore, that, before any argument in favor of the absolute pardon of all who repent, can be allowed to result from the natural fitness of the penitent to receive it, or from the disposition of benevolence to bestow it on all who are the subjects of such fitness, it certainly must be shown, either that sin is no offence, otherwise than as it is an affront offered to God, in a private personal capacity; or, that repentance effectually repairs all the damages which the sin repented of has

occasioned, or has a tendency to occasion, in the system of intelligent beings. But neither of these things, it is apprehended, can be made to appear.

But, in the economy of redemption, pardon is offered to the guilty. On condition of repentance, the gospel promises not only an exemption from punishment, but an eternal inheritance of glory. Yet, what is repentance, that it should thus be available with God? It cannot be thus available, surely, by virtue of its own natural value. For the most which can be said in favor of a sinner who repents is, that, having rebelled, he now gives up his rebellion and returns to his duty. What, then, can this possibly merit? Can it entitle him to the pardon of his sins, for which he actually deserved destruction; and also to a new and glorious state of existence in heaven? Surely the conscience of no repenting sinner, unacquainted with the gospel, would ever suggest a hope of this inestimable good. Yet God has, in his abundant grace, offered and promised not the pardon of sin only, but eternal blessedness and glory also to all who will truly repent. It is, therefore, as unreasonable as it is unscriptural, to suppose that God has done this merely because a state of repentance is the most fit state, in which a sinner can be to receive pardon. Such a state being the most fit, it is obvious, indeed, that the repentance of a sinner is necessary; but it by no means appears, that this is all that is necessary. It shows a reason why repentance is required; but it certainly does not show that it did not behoove Christ to suffer in order that the sinner, prepared by repentance, might be consistently forgiven.

The sufferings of Christ constituted the most affecting scene which was ever exhibited on earth. His death was the most grand and awful event which the world ever witnessed. In view of it, the sun withheld his beams, and the heavens were clothed in mourning; the earth trembled, and the graves of the dead were opened. Nature sympathized with her suffering and dying Lord. But, why did it please the Lord thus to bruise his Son? Why did it behoove the Son of God thus to suffer? It certainly affords very little satisfaction to answer such inquiries, by resolving the necessity of this august event into the mere sovereign pleasure of Jehovah. If the question were asked, why it is necessary that a sparrow should fall, it might be a satisfactory answer to say, God has been pleased so to order it; because it cannot be reasonably expected, that God will assign to his creatures, the reasons of his conduct respecting every event, which is of no greater magnitude than this.

But, though events of the smallest magnitude may thus be resolved into the sovereignty of God, it by no means follows, that events of the greatest magnitude may be disposed of in the same manner. The Scrip-

tures assure us, that God loved the Son, and was well pleased in him. How, then, should he smite him, awake the sword against him, and put him to grief? Our feelings revolt at the thought that the Father of mercies should ever be pleased to do this, unless there existed some important reason, some urgent necessity for the affecting procedure. If the Scriptures furnished us with no means of ascertaining what that necessity was, yet, in view of the divine attributes, we should be constrained to believe that such necessity existed. But, thanks be to God, who has not left us in darkness respecting this primary article of our holy faith, he has clearly revealed to us the reason, why the Son of man must be lifted up; why his cross should be so highly extolled by the inspired writers, and why the blood of sprinkling should speak better things than the blood of Abel. Perhaps there is no one passage in the Scriptures, which more clearly unfolds this great doctrine, than that of the Apostle Paul, Rom. 3: 25, 26; "Whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins which are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." In this passage, and the context, we have something more than a bare mention of the atonement, or a declaration concerning it; we have rather a development of its nature and necessity. The apostle here expressly informs us, that the sufferings of Christ were necessary, to declare God's righteousness for the remission of sins; that God might be just, and yet the justifier of the sinner, who believeth in Jesus.

There is such a connection between the doctrines of grace, that it is sometimes difficult to illustrate one of them clearly, without bringing others into view. This is peculiarly the case with the doctrine of atonement. Two of the points, more immediately connected with this, are total depravity, and justification by grace through faith. These points are illustrated, in the passage last quoted, and its context, in their natural order and necessary connection. One is mentioned as a ground of the necessity of atonement; and the other as a consequence of atonement. The atonement would never have been necessary, if man had not sinned; neither could sinners ever have been justified by grace, if Christ had not died. The apostle clearly illustrates this order and connection of these leading doctrines. On the subject of depravity, he quotes from the Psalms the following description of the character of man, in his natural state: "There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit;

the poison of asps is under their lips ; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness ; their feet are swift to shed blood ; destruction and misery are in their ways ; and the way of peace they have not known ; there is no fear of God before their eyes."

From this description of the character of man, the apostle concludes that no flesh can ever be justified by the deeds of the law. "Therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." This very naturally leads to the atonement as being necessary to the salvation of any sinner. And, if there is no way in which sinners can be saved, except through the atonement, it plainly follows, that justification must be "freely, by grace." This the apostle states. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Having thus cleared his way, with much ease and perspicuity he unfolds the nature and necessity of Christ's atonement. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." By this it appears, that God could not have declared his righteousness in forgiving sins, if he had not set Christ forth to "be a propitiation." It also appears, that the work of Christ, which was strictly propitiatory, was, he shed his blood ; so that if he had not shed his blood, all which he did besides could have made no propitiation. "He was set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." It appears, moreover, that the nature of the atonement is such, that God cannot appear righteous, in saving any, unless they have faith in Christ's blood. The object for which he was set forth was, "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." This the apostle teaches us was done, that God might "declare his righteousness for the remission of sins ;" or, in other words, that he might appear righteous in forgiving sins. Having said this, he proceeds, in the next verse, to state the same thing again, in language a little different, as if anxious, by all means, to prevent mistakes, on a subject of such importance. "To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." On the whole, it appears evident that the doctrine, which the apostle designed to teach, is this ; if God had not set forth Christ to shed his blood for the remission of sins, he could not have been just, in saving sinners ; nor can he now, unless they believe in Jesus.

This passage of the apostle will be made the theme of the following discussion. No one will be surprised, therefore, if it should be frequently mentioned, and alluded to, in the course of the work. If the reader is a believer in the correctness and divine authority of the sacred Scriptures, he will readily assent to any thing, which shall be fairly proved from them. In perfect consistency with this, however, he may, if inquisitive,

desire to know why God could not have declared his righteousness, if he had pardoned sinners, without setting forth Christ to be a propitiation. He may wish to see the very reasons pointed out, which would have rendered such a procedure inconsistent with a manifestation of divine righteousness; that is, he may wish to see the very thing which rendered atonement necessary, and have the precise obstacles which stood in the way of the sinner's happiness clearly pointed out. If this necessity should be distinctly brought into view, and the obstacles plainly described, he may then wish to know what Christ has done, to meet that necessity and to remove those obstacles. He may also wish to see clearly how what Christ has done meets that necessity, and the precise manner, in which those obstacles are removed. If all this should be accomplished, it will certainly afford him much satisfaction to find the scheme fully supported, by the uniform tenor of inspired truth. How far this is accomplished, in the following essay, is submitted to the judgment of the impartial reader.

CHAPTER II.

SOME OBSTACLES POINTED OUT, WHICH STOOD IN THE WAY OF GOD'S PARDONING SINNERS WITHOUT AN ATONEMENT.

THAT some atonement was necessary, is so clearly revealed in Scripture, and so evident from the event of Christ's death, that among those who have professed to believe the Bible, it has never been extensively denied. The reasons why it was necessary, have furnished a subject of more dispute. Some have supposed it was necessary to conciliate the divine feelings, and render God propitious. They have imagined, that when man sinned, the anger of God was so enkindled against him, and his indignation so excited, as to exclude from his bosom all compassion towards him, and all disposition to do him good; and hence that the atonement was necessary to cool the divine anger, and to produce in the mind of God, a disposition more favorable to the sinner. In short, that it was necessary Christ should suffer, and die on the cross, that the Supreme Being might become compassionate towards sinners.

But this differs very widely from the view which the Holy Scriptures give us of this subject. They represent the Supreme Being as feeling tenderly compassionate towards sinners, antecedently to the atonement, and as being no more compassionate towards them since Christ died,

than he was before. If there had been no atonement, his compassion would have been the same. If atonement had been impossible, or, in the view of infinite wisdom, ineligible, still the divine compassion would have been just as great, as it is now since Christ has died. In this case, though God would have been under a moral necessity of executing the penalty of his law upon sinners, yet he would have felt the same compassion and kindness towards them which he now feels; and if it could have been consistent to do them any good, he would have been as much inclined to do it as he now is.

We have abundant evidence in the death of Christ itself, that his death was not necessary to induce the Supreme Being to exercise benevolence, and the tenderest compassion towards sinners. For surely, if God had not been benevolent, if he had not been gracious, and full of compassion to sinners, he would never have concerted the scheme of atonement, at infinite expense, to do them good. If he had not already loved the world, it is inconceivable that he should have given his only begotten and well-beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Accordingly, the Scriptures evidently lead us to view the gift of Christ, to a lost world, as a fruit of that tender compassion, and as a wonderful expression of that love, which God felt towards sinners, before any atonement was made for them. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly." Rom. 5: 8. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4: 10. This same love and compassion, under the influence of which God gave his Son to be a sacrifice for sin, must forever have remained his immutable disposition, even if Christ had never died.

The scheme which supposes atonement necessary that a change might be produced in the personal feelings of the Divine Being, or to render him compassionate towards sinners, presents a very unscriptural idea, both of the nature of sin, and of the character of God. It represents sin as being injurious to God in a private personal capacity only; and it represents God as being in the highest degree inexorable. For, if sin be injurious to God in a private personal capacity only, and he be not an inexorable, but a compassionate being, he might certainly pardon, at least as many sinners as repent, without any atonement whatever. But sin should not be considered in this light. It is an offence against God, in a public capacity, as the Supreme Governor of the universe. Hence, notwithstanding God is infinite in benevolence and compassion, he cannot grant pardon to sinners, unless it can be done under such circumstances, and in such a way, as render it consistent with the highest inter-

est of the great community over which his government extends. "If wisdom obligeth a temporal prince, in his narrow sphere, on several accounts, duly to guard and qualify his pardons; how much more is it reasonable and expedient, that the Father and Ruler of all things, whose government comprehends and inspects the vast systems of intelligent natures that are, and all that, to all eternity, may possibly be; how much more reasonable is it, that he should order the grand dispensation of granting pardons to a sinful world, in a proper and suitable manner."

If, with the difficulties in view which have stood in the way of dispensing pardon, even among temporal princes, we place ourselves back, in our imagination, to the time when the parents of our race first sinned, and inquire why God might not continue them in a state of happiness, notwithstanding their transgression, it is believed difficulties in the way, of very serious importance, may be easily discovered. Though we certainly shall find no want of kindness and compassion in the divine feelings, yet other difficulties may readily be perceived, to remove which an atonement was indispensably necessary, as they were, otherwise, wholly insurmountable. God had given his rational creatures a law, as the rule of their conduct, and sanctioned this law with an awful penalty. Instead of continuing obedient to this law, and conforming to this rule, our first parents departed from it, and transgressed. If, in these circumstances, God had directly pardoned them, and continued them in a state of happiness, without any adequate atonement, would not his character have appeared questionable, in the view of other intelligent beings? By such a procedure, would he not have given rational creatures reason to conclude, or at least to suspect, that he had either given them a law which he did not esteem good, or that he was destitute of a disposition to vindicate and support one, which he did esteem good? In this way, then, how could he declare his righteousness? How could he appear just? Perhaps, indeed, on a careful inquiry, it may be found evident, that, if God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he would have appeared very unjust in several things, which are infinitely important to the universe.

1. He would have appeared unjust to his holy law. It is unjust to treat any thing with less respect than it really deserves. A law cannot be treated with respect, unless it is executed. Every good law ought to be respected; and, therefore, ought to be executed; while a bad law is entitled to no respect; and, therefore, ought not to be executed. Hence, to decline executing any law is to treat that law as a bad one. It is treating it as every wise and good being would treat a bad law. If, then, any being should treat a good law in this manner, he would treat it with great disrespect. He would practically say it ought to be treated as a

bad law ; which must be exceedingly disrespectful, and of course highly unjust. Every one must see that to treat a good man, who deserves high respect, as a bad man who deserves no respect, would be highly unjust. The case is precisely the same with respect to a law. To treat a good law as a bad one ought to be treated, is, in the nature of things, as unjust as to treat a good man as a bad one ought to be treated.

Now the law of God is infinitely holy and just and good ; and, being such, is infinitely deserving of respect ; and, since God is an infinitely just and good being, it must be morally impossible, that he should treat his law in any other manner than it ought to be treated. He cannot treat it disrespectfully. But mankind have sinned, and transgressed this law ; for which transgression it condemns them to eternal misery. If, in these circumstances, God had given up the penalty of the law, and offered pardon to guilty man, without an atonement, he would have treated the law precisely as a bad law ought to be treated ; and, of course, with the highest injustice and disrespect. But if, when man sinned, God had executed the penalty on him, he would have treated the law with respect, as a good law ought to be treated ; and, since the law is perfectly good, this would have been to treat it justly, or as it deserves to be treated. Thus any procedure which should diminish ought from this respect, would be injustice to the law. If, then, the penalty should be remitted, something else must be done, which would manifest for the law as much respect as the complete execution of its penalty ; otherwise, the law must be treated unjustly. But if any thing of this kind could be done, then God might grant pardon to sinners without doing any injustice to the law ; because, in bestowing pardon in this way, he would show as much respect for his law as he could show by executing its penalty. Any thing which should fully answer this purpose, must be, so far, a complete atonement. It is obvious, therefore, that, if sinners were to be pardoned, atonement was necessary, in order that proper respect might be shown to the divine law.

Besides, if God had pardoned sinners without any atonement, he would not only have treated his law with great disrespect, but he would have utterly failed in the support of its authority. There is no way in which a violated law can be supported, without either executing its penalty, or doing something else, which, as a substitute, will answer the same ends. To neglect the execution of the penalty, when the law is violated, is, in effect, to destroy the existence of the law to which it is annexed ; for a law, destitute of authority, is, in reality, no law. But every good law certainly has a just claim upon the lawgiver, to cause its authority to be respected. Hence, if God, by neglecting to execute his law, should destroy its authority, it is manifest that he would treat it with the greatest

injustice. If, when mankind sinned, God had proceeded to execute on them the penalty of his law, he would, in this way, have completely supported its authority; and, in this respect, have done it justice. But, without executing the penalty, he could not be just to his law, unless something could be done, which, as a substitute, would as fully support its authority. Any thing which would do this, would be, in this respect, a satisfactory atonement. On the ground of such an atonement, God might appear just to his law in pardoning transgressors; because pardoning them, in this way, would not injure its authority. But if God had pardoned sinners without such an atonement, he must, of necessity, have destroyed the life and authority of an infinitely good law; and this must have been infinite injustice. Atonement was necessary, therefore, that sinners might be pardoned, consistently with doing justice to the law.

2. If God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he must have been unjust to his kingdom.

That a king may be just to his kingdom, he must adopt all proper means to promote its best interest. That this may be attained, one thing, which is essentially necessary, is, that peace and harmony may be secured as far as possible. But that peace and harmony may be secured among moral beings, they must be placed under the authority of good and wholesome laws, which are calculated to discountenance vice, and encourage virtue. There is no other way in which moral beings can be properly governed. If, then, a king desires to promote the interest and happiness of his kingdom, this desire will lead him to enact good laws for its government; laws which have a tendency to restrain and suppress the various kinds of wickedness which disturb the peace of society. But every good law must be enforced with some suitable penalty.* Should a law be enacted without any penalty, however suitable and important its provisions, it must be destitute of all authority. It would be of the nature of advice, rather than of law. For it could have no more power or tendency than mere advice, to restrain from immorality. But if it be necessary that vice should be suppressed or restrained, that the best interest of a kingdom may be secured, it must be equally necessary that efficient laws should be made against it; and, that laws may be of this character, they must be enforced with proper penalties.

* "What can be the benefit of a law (if indeed there can be a law) without penal sanctions? It can suggest no motive to obedience from the consideration of any good as its reward; nor restrain from disobedience by the fear of evil. That, indeed, can, with no propriety, be termed a law, which has no sanctions—which does not enforce duty by the consideration of the good and evil consequences which shall follow obedience, and the reverse." — *West on Atonement*, p. 180.

Every king, therefore, is under obligation to his kingdom, to enact laws, enforced with suitable penalties, against the practice of vice. If he do otherwise, he must conduct towards his kingdom with the greatest injustice. Because, in no other way can he possibly secure the great object of government.

But if the well being of a kingdom require that laws be enacted against vice, and enforced with penalties, it must equally require that these laws be faithfully executed. However good laws may be in themselves, if they are not carried into execution, they lose their force and energy, and utterly fail of securing the ends for which they were designed. A good king, therefore, having made laws for the benefit of his kingdom, will be very careful to have them executed. Should any king do otherwise he would not promote the best interest of his kingdom. Instead of restraining, he would encourage wickedness. His subjects, perceiving that he disregarded and slighted his own laws, would be encouraged to disregard and slight them likewise. Seeing the laws were not executed, they would not fear the penalty. They would be under no more restraint than if no laws existed. The kingdom would be filled with vice and confusion, and would soon come to an end. Whenever any government ceases to execute the penalty of a law, that law is virtually repealed, because it ceases to produce any effect, and becomes a nullity. Some governments seldom repeal laws in any other way. Whenever any law is judged to be improper, or no longer necessary, instead of being formally repealed, the execution of it is discontinued. The penalty is no longer inflicted. This is designed to answer, and does really answer, the purpose of a repeal. It is necessary, therefore, in order that any king may be just to his kingdom, that he should not only enact good laws, enforced with proper penalties, but that he should cause these laws to be faithfully executed.

All this is as necessary in the divine government, as in human governments, and indeed as much more necessary, as the former is more important than the latter. It is, in the nature of things, impossible, that God should govern moral beings, as moral beings, in any other way than by laws. It is not intended, that God has not power enough to govern them by impulse, as he governs the material world ; for he unquestionably has. This, however, would not be to govern them as moral beings, but as material objects. God may as well govern material objects, as such, by the influence of motives, as he can govern moral beings, as such, without the authority of laws.* When God gave existence to in-

* "Moral creatures act from motive: and we know of no other way in which moral government can be exercised over them, than by rules of conduct prescribed and enforced by promises and threatenings. Creatures, incapable of influence from motives

telligent beings, he was under the necessity either of leaving them to themselves, without retaining any government over them, or of placing them under the authority of a moral law. For, since it is absurd to suppose a race of moral beings governed as such, without moral laws, it follows, that God must govern moral beings by laws, or else exercise no government over them. But it must be obvious, that it is utterly irreconcilable with wisdom and goodness, to create intelligent beings, and then leave them without government. It clearly results, therefore, that God was under a moral necessity of placing moral beings under moral laws. It must be evident, moreover, that a penalty was no less necessary to give efficacy to the law of God, than it is to any other law. Hence it follows, that when God placed intelligent beings under a moral law, he was under a moral necessity of enforcing that law with a proper penalty. He is, also, under the same necessity of executing the law, by inflicting the penalty on every transgressor; unless something can be devised, which will, as a substitute, equally secure the life and energy of the law.

From what has already been said, it is evident that the law of God was necessary to secure the best interest of his kingdom, by discountenancing disobedience or wickedness. Justice to his kingdom required that such a law should be given to his moral subjects; because its best interests could not be secured in any other way. But no law can have any influence to deter moral beings from vice, unless enforced by a proper penalty; nor can it continue to have influence, unless the penalty is executed when the law is violated. Hence if when God gave a law to the subjects of his kingdom, prohibiting wickedness, he had suffered it to be transgressed with impunity, the law would have had no tendency to restrain them. Every law must be enforced, or its authority must cease. If, when mankind transgressed the divine law, they had been suffered to escape with impunity, it must entirely have destroyed the authority and force of the law. Moral beings would have perceived that it was not the determination of God to execute the penalty of his law. When they had learned this, all the restraints which the law had imposed on them would be immediately removed. But if, instead of this, moral beings perceive that God is determined to support his law by executing its penalty, they

of good and evil, happiness and misery, are neither themselves moral, nor proper objects of moral government. And where creatures are subjected to no rules of conduct enforced by promises and threatenings, we see no sense in which they can be under law. It is essential to moral law, that it contains rules of action enforced by promises and threatenings. These are fit to operate as motives on the minds of moral creatures. But if the force of the threatenings of the word of God be destroyed, the influence of the promises must equally cease; and moral government will then be at an end." — *West*, p. 185.

will be under a powerful restraint, because they will be afraid to transgress, lest the penalty should be inflicted on them. In no other way is it possible that the law should impose any restraint, which might not have been equally imposed by mere advice.

If, when man transgressed, God had executed the penalty on him, this would have afforded evidence to all moral beings that he was determined to execute the penalty of his law on transgressors. This would have had a powerful tendency to restrain them from disobedience. They would have been afraid to transgress. Had God done this, therefore, he would have done something which would tend to deter others from transgression, and to secure peace and order in his kingdom. In this way he would have been just to his kingdom. But if when man became a sinner by transgressing the divine law, God had pardoned him without any atonement, this would have been evidence to intelligent beings that he was not determined to execute the penalty of his law. They would, of course, have ceased to be afraid of the penalty, and the law would no longer have imposed any restraint upon them. If, then, God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he would not have done any thing to deter others from disobedience. Instead of preventing, he would have encouraged wickedness. For when moral beings perceived that God did not respect his own law, they would have been encouraged to treat it with disrespect. When they perceived that God did not honor it, by supporting its authority, they would have been encouraged to dishonor it, by disobeying its precepts. In this way, instead of deterring moral beings from disobedience, God would have encouraged them in it. This, instead of promoting and securing, would have destroyed the best interests of his subjects. Hence if God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he must have been infinitely unjust to his kingdom. If, however, any thing by way of atonement could be done which would tend to deter others from disobedience, as effectually as would the execution of the penalty of the law on transgressors, God might, out of respect to this, pardon transgressors and be just to his kingdom still. But any atonement which would not be as effectual in deterring others from disobedience, as the execution of the penalty of the law would be, must be insufficient; because this would not secure the good of the kingdom so effectually. The execution of the penalty of the law on those subjects who had transgressed, would have deterred other moral subjects from transgression, and in this way have done justice to the kingdom; but justice could not be done by any thing short of this, unless it were something which, as a substitute, would as fully answer the same purpose; that is, be equally effectual in deterring others from disobedience. It was necessary, there-

fore, that there should be an atonement in order that God "might be just, and the justifier of" those who had transgressed his law.

3. If God had pardoned sinners without any atonement, he would have been unjust to himself.

Every good being, in order to do justice to his own character, must manifest his goodness. A wise being, in order to do justice to his character, must manifest his wisdom; or, at least, he must not manifest any thing which is opposite to wisdom. All must allow that if one being should knowingly give a wrong representation of the character of another, who is wise and good, he would be very unjust. But if a good and wise being should give a wrong representation of his own character (if this were possible) there would be the same injustice done, which there would if the same representation were made by another. The injury done to the good character would be the same in the one case as in the other. Hence it must be evident that if God is good, if he is wise, and if he is consistent in his conduct, he must manifest his goodness and his wisdom, or be very unjust to his own character. But if God had pardoned sinners without any atonement, he could not have manifested either his goodness, wisdom, or consistency of conduct. This may clearly appear from the following considerations.

First. In this way, he could not have manifested any regard for holiness, or any hatred of sin.

By God's pardoning a sinner is meant his receiving him to favor, and treating him as if he had never sinned. If, therefore, he had pardoned sinners without any atonement, it must have been impossible, in the nature of things, for him to have given intelligent beings any reason to believe that he is more opposed to sin than to holiness. For, in this case, he would have treated sinners in the same manner that he treats holy beings. He would have put no difference between the holy and the profane. He would have manifested no more disapprobation of the disobedient than of the obedient; nor any more complacency in the obedient than in the disobedient. It is plain, therefore, that in this way he could not have manifested any regard for holiness nor hatred of sin. Hence he would have done infinite injustice to his own character. He never could have appeared an object of holy love and reverence. Holy beings never could have felt safe in his hands. They must have lost that confidence and delight in his character, which resulted from contemplating him as a being who loved righteousness and hated iniquity.

It is vain to object to this, that God might have manifested his hatred of sin by a public declaration of it, even though he had pardoned sinners. There is no more sure method of determining what any being

is, than by ascertaining what he does. The declarations of no being can command rational belief, while these declarations are manifestly contradicted by his actions. If an earthly sovereign should treat his obedient and disobedient subjects precisely in the same manner, they would both conclude, that disobedience is just as pleasing to him as obedience. If a parent should neglect to punish his disobedient child, and to reward the obedient, they would justly come to the same conclusion. No professions of the sovereign or of the parent to the contrary would command rational belief, because their actions would contradict them. The case would be precisely the same with respect to the Supreme Being, if he should profess a regard to holiness and a hatred of sin, and not act accordingly.

If, when mankind sinned, God had executed the penalty of his law upon them, this would have manifested his hatred of sin. By this, therefore, he would have appeared just to his own character. But in no other way could he be just to himself, unless it were by something, which, as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law, would make an equally bright display of his hatred of sin. If any thing of this kind could be done, which would manifest the divine hatred of sin as fully as would the just punishment of it, this would be a satisfactory atonement. Out of respect to such an atonement, God might pardon sinners, and still be just to his own character. His pardoning sinners on account of such an atonement, would not lead holy beings to distrust the integrity of his character. But if God should pardon sinners without such an atonement, his character must appear at least doubtful, if not decidedly bad. Holy beings, perceiving that he treated the holy and wicked alike, would be utterly unable to determine, from his conduct towards them, which acted most agreeably to his mind.* In this situa-

* "It is a common and a just observation, that actions speak louder than words; yea, a maxim on which we so firmly rely, that we give the whole weight to the former when they contradict the latter. All agree that the mind and will of God may be intelligibly expressed in words. Yet no one will deny that they may be written in much deeper and more legible characters in the sensible pleasures and pains which he may bestow or inflict upon us. Therefore the evidence of God's love of virtue and his hatred of vice must ultimately be derived from the treatment he gives his creatures. In this we ultimately and most sensibly discover his view of the characters of his creatures, and the estimation in which he holds them; and in this we most clearly discover the feelings of the divine mind towards virtue and vice. If the views which the Supreme Being entertains of characters, and the feelings of his mind towards those who sustain them, are most clearly discovered in the treatment of his creatures, in the natural good and evil he ultimately brings upon them; then, of course, where the treatment is the same, we are to judge that the feelings, the disposition of the divine mind toward the objects, are also the same. What but this can be the rule of our judgment? If God's treatment be the best and ultimate rule of judging, then

tion, being unable to learn his character, they could not feel safe. His treating the unholy as holy beings ought to be treated would, at least, lead them to suspect, that he might treat his holy subjects as unholy ones deserve to be treated. And thus, in their perplexity, they might fear him, but they could never love or trust him. But if they perceived that he would never pardon sinners without an atonement, this would show them his regard for holiness and his hatred of sin, and would secure their confidence and inspire their love. Thus it appears that an atonement was necessary to the pardon of sinners, in order that God might manifest his hatred of sin, and thus be just to himself.*

Secondly. If God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he could not have manifested any wisdom in giving the law, but would have been chargeable with the greatest inconsistency of conduct.

It is evidently impossible for God to manifest any wisdom in giving a law which could answer no valuable purpose. But, certainly, if he had entirely neglected to execute the law which he has given, this law must have been utterly useless. Nor would he have appeared merely destitute of wisdom; but his conduct would have involved glaring inconsistency. This inconsistency might have been thus stated: God has given a law to his creatures, which he refuses, or, at least, entirely neglects to support. This law is either good, or not good. If it is not good, why did he give it? If it is good, why does he not execute it? In either case, he must be chargeable with imperfection. If God has given a law to his creatures which is not good, it must be because he either could not devise, or did not choose, a good one. In the one case, he must be deficient in wisdom; in the other, he must be destitute of goodness. But if the law be good, and God does not support it, this must be either because he is not able, or because he does not choose, to support it. Here, therefore, must be, either a deficiency of power, or, as before, a destitution of goodness. In either case, the divine character is ruined. But if God had pardoned sinners, without an atonement, all this must have followed. It must have been forever true, that God had given a law, and refused or neglected to support it; that he had denounced evil

similar treatment authorizes us to believe that he holds all the subjects of it in equal estimation, and is equally pleased or displeased with one as with another. If God should treat the virtuous and vicious alike, from whence could we infer his approbation of the former, or his abhorrence of the latter? If his treatment of them in his government be the same, then either his government fails of expressing his proper character, or his character is not uniform and perfect. And if God's actions and conduct towards his creatures do not truly express his character, his mind and will, how shall we know that his word does? And by what methods can we ever come to the knowledge of the divine character?" — *West on Atonement*, p. 18, 19.

* See *West on Atonement*, p. 28.

against transgressors, and never fulfilled his threatening. In this case, his character could never have been cleared of the most glaring inconsistency, and imperfection.

Nothing can be plainer than this, if God does not execute what he has threatened, he must appear inconsistent, if not destitute of virtue.* If it was necessary, when God gave his law, that he should enforce it with an awful penalty, or accompany it with the threatening, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," it must, for the same reason, be necessary, that this threatening should be executed. If the execution of this threatening would be hard, unmerciful, or unnecessary, then the threatening itself must have been highly unreasonable. If it would be wrong in God to execute what he has threatened, it must follow, that he has threatened to do wrong. But if it would not be wrong in God to execute his threatening, then, certainly, it must be wrong not to execute it; for if he should not execute his threatening, it would be in reality an acknowledgment that his threatening was unreasonable and unnecessary, and that, on this account, it ought not to be executed. It would appear, on the part of God, like repentance; as if he now regretted that he had annexed any such threatening to his law, and resolved that he would be more reasonable than to carry it into execution. It is necessary, therefore, that God should execute what he has threatened, unless something be done by way of atonement, which, as a substitute, will fully answer the same purpose, in order that his own character may remain unsullied, and he appear glorious in holiness.

If, when mankind sinned, God had executed the penalty of the law upon them, his conduct would then have appeared consistent. He would have appeared just to himself. Hence, in order that he might pardon sinners, and still appear consistent, it was necessary that something should be done, by way of atonement, which would answer every purpose, which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered.

When all these purposes were answered, by an atonement, as fully as they could have been by the execution of the law, then God might pardon sinners, and be consistent, and just to his own character. But any thing, which would have failed of answering all these purposes, could not

* "If it be unnecessary to the glory of the divine character, and the good of God's moral government, that he should express his displeasure against sin, when it had actually taken place, by inflicting natural evil; it was of course unnecessary, that God should ever threaten the sinner with natural evil. Where the general good doth not require punishments to be inflicted, it doth not require that they should be threatened. So also in cases where benevolence will not express displeasure, it will not threaten creatures with it. It discovers capriciousness and want of wisdom to annex penalties to laws which never need be executed—to express displeasure in words, in cases wherein it doth not in fact exist." — *West on Atonement*, p. 148.

have been a sufficient atonement. This must be evident from the consideration, that nothing short of the execution of the whole penalty could answer the ends of the law.

Some have supposed that though an atonement was necessary, in order that sinners might be pardoned, yet it was not necessary that the atonement should be sufficient to answer all the purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. But this cannot be true, unless it is also true that if there had been no atonement, it would not have been necessary to execute the whole penalty of the law on transgressors. But the same reasoning which shows that it was necessary that any part of the penalty should be executed, also shows that it was equally necessary that the whole should be executed. For if it is not necessary that God should execute all that he has threatened, it must follow that he has threatened too much, and, consequently, that his threatenings are unreasonable and improper. If God's threatenings are too severe, if they are unreasonable, then it was unreasonable for God to make them. And it is readily granted, that if divine threatenings are unreasonable, if the penalty of the law is too great, then it is not necessary that it should be fully executed. But if the penalty be not unreasonable, if it be not too great, then it is necessary that the whole should be executed. Because if it should appear that God had given a law, and annexed a penalty which is hard and unreasonable, it must be impossible ever to clear the divine character of imperfection. But if God had neither executed the whole penalty of the law, nor done any thing by way of atonement which would fully answer the same purposes, his conduct must have implied an acknowledgment that the penalty of his law was unreasonably severe, and ought not to be fully executed. There was, therefore, the same necessity that God should execute the penalty of his law fully, in order to preserve his character, that there was that he should execute it in part. No objection can be urged against one, which will not lie against the other with equal force. If God has made threatenings which are unreasonable, in any respect, it as really proves him imperfect, as though they were unreasonable in every respect. But if God should not execute his threatenings in every respect, it would be an acknowledgment that they are, in some respect, unreasonable. It was necessary, therefore, that God, if he would do justice to his own character,* should execute, literally, all his

* "Where evil need not be executed, it never need be threatened. We see no valuable end answered by threatenings which never need be executed. When executions are unnecessary, threatenings are equally so — yea, more; inasmuch as threatenings, which are designed never to be executed, and never need be, necessarily sink the character of the ruler, and bring his authority into contempt. It cannot but be seen, that if the glory of God do not require him to execute, neither does it to threaten. All

threatenings, unless something could be done by way of atonement which, as a substitute, would fully answer all the same purposes. Hence it is evident that an atonement was necessary, in order that sinners might be pardoned.

This exactly agrees with the view which the apostle has given of the subject in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. Having freely remarked on the universal and total depravity of mankind, and shown the impossibility of their being justified by the law, he introduces the method of justification revealed in the gospel. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe. — Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins. — To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Here the apostle decides the point respecting the necessity and design of atonement; that it was to manifest the rectitude of the divine character; that God might be just in the justification of sinners.*

CHAPTER III.

WHETHER THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST WERE SUFFICIENT TO REMOVE
THE OBSTACLES WHICH STOOD IN THE WAY OF THE PARDON OF
SINNERS.

BEFORE the subject of this chapter is introduced, it may not be amiss to call the attention of the reader to a brief review of the preceding one. For, unless the obstacles, which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners, be distinctly in view, we certainly cannot be well prepared to understand what Christ has done to remove them. Let it be carefully remembered, then, that the atonement was not necessary to soften the feelings of God, and render him kind and compassionate. The divine feelings towards sinners, considered as objects of benevolence and compassion, are not in the least degree altered. God felt the same tender-

objections, therefore, against the necessity of atonement, in order to the pardon and salvation of sinners, lie with equal weight against every threatening we find in the book of God." — *West on Atonement*, p. 179.

* See Wardlaw and Macknight on this passage.

ness and compassion towards them before atonement was made, which he now feels ; and if atonement had been impossible, or ineligible, in the view of infinite wisdom, still the divine benevolence and compassion towards them would have been for ever the same. If there had been no atonement, it is indeed true, God could never have pardoned them, but the reason would not have been found in the want of benevolence, or compassion. He would have been prevented by difficulties of quite a different nature. So that, although he would have been, in this case, for ever inflexible, yet he would never have been unmerciful, or destitute of compassion. The insuperable difficulties which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners without an atonement, have been brought into view. It has been shown, that, if God had pardoned sinners without any atonement, he must have been altogether unjust in several things, which are of infinite importance to the system of moral beings.

1. He would have been unjust to his holy law, as he could neither have shown it the respect which it deserves, nor supported its authority. This, however, as a righteous lawgiver, he was under obligation to do.

2. He would have been unjust to his kingdom. He would have done nothing to deter others from disobedience, and thus to secure that order and harmony among his subjects, which the good of his kingdom justly demanded.

3. He would have been unjust to himself. He would not have manifested his regard for holiness, and his hatred of sin ; nor any wisdom, or consistency of conduct, in giving the law. In this way he would have ruined his most excellent and glorious character.

These difficulties were an insuperable barrier against the pardon of sinners, without an atonement. To remove these difficulties, the atonement was necessary. That God might be just, in these respects, while he pardoned sinners, was the object of the atonement. And in order that this object might be accomplished, it was necessary that the atonement should answer all the purposes which the complete execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. Otherwise, it would be insufficient. It was necessary that it should manifest as high respect for the law, and do as much for the support of its authority, as the complete execution of its penalty would have done. Otherwise, God could not be just to his law in pardoning sinners. It was necessary that it should be calculated as effectually to deter others from disobedience, as the full execution of the penalty of the law would have been. Otherwise, in pardoning sinners, God could not be just to his kingdom. It was also necessary, that it should manifest God's regard for holiness, and hatred of sin, as clearly as the full execution of the penalty of the law would have done. Otherwise, in granting pardon, he could not be just to his

own character. In short, that his righteousness might be declared, and he be just, and the justifier of any sinner, it was necessary that the atonement should fully and completely answer all the purposes which the full and complete execution of the penalty of the law would have answered.

The way is now prepared to inquire, more directly, in what the atonement of Christ consists; or, in other words, what Christ has done to remove those obstacles which stood in the way of the pardon of sinners. To ascertain this, only two inquiries will be necessary; one, concerning what Christ has done by the way of suffering; and the other, concerning what he has done in the way of active obedience. These two inquiries may determine the point; because these things comprise all that Christ ever did in our world.

Some suppose that the atonement of Christ consists in what he did by way of suffering. Others suppose it consists in his active obedience. And others, that it consists in both. One or other of these opinions must be according to truth; for nothing but what consists in sufferings, or in obedience, has ever been done by Christ which has any relation to the subject. In order to ascertain, with certainty, in which of these opinions the truth lies; that is, whether the atonement of Christ consists in his sufferings alone, or in his obedience alone, or in both united; it will be necessary to compare his sufferings, and his obedience, severally, with the necessity of atonement.* If, on examination, it should appear that the sufferings of Christ fully meet all the necessities of atonement; that is, answer all the purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered, and that the obedience of Christ does not answer these purposes; it will follow, as an undeniable consequence, that the atonement consists in sufferings. If, on the other hand, it should appear upon examination that the obedience of Christ fully meets all the necessities of atonement, or answers all the purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered, and that the sufferings of Christ do not, then it will follow, by unavoidable consequence, that the atonement consists in obedience. But if it should appear that neither the obedience nor the sufferings of Christ alone are capable of meeting all the necessities of atonement, but that, united, they fully accomplish this end, then the conclusion must be, that Christ's atonement does not consist wholly in sufferings, nor wholly in obedience, but partly in each, or in both united.

Our first inquiry will be concerning what Christ did by way of suffering. That Christ did suffer, is a truth clearly established in the holy Scriptures. He was a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

* By necessity of atonement, I mean those circumstances of the case which rendered atonement necessary.

Rev. 13: 8. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." Eph. 1: 7. "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9: 12. "Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Pet. 2: 24. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. — He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. 53: 3, 5. "He is our passover, sacrificed for us." 1 Cor. 5: 7. "Now, once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. 9: 26. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Luke 24: 25. "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day." Luke 24: 46. The Scriptures abound with similar declarations. Let us, then, inquire whether the sufferings of Christ meet all the necessities of atonement. Are they sufficient to answer all the purposes which would have been answered by the execution of the penalty of the law?

1. Do the sufferings of Christ make it manifest that God respects his holy law? Do they manifest as much respect for the law, as the execution of its penalty would have done; so that God, in pardoning sinners out of respect to Christ's sufferings, can be just to his law?

That a satisfactory answer may be given to these inquiries, it is necessary that we be able to state clearly how God would have manifested respect for his law, if he had literally executed its penalty; or in what that manifestation of respect would have consisted. If we can state clearly and definitely how the execution of the penalty upon sinners would have manifested God's respect for his law, then we shall be prepared to ascertain with equal clearness whether the sufferings of Christ manifested the same respect.

The execution of the penalty would not have manifested God's respect for the law, unless it had, in his view, involved in it an evil, in itself considered. The manifestation of respect would not have consisted in simply satisfying the literal demands of the law; but, rather, in submitting to an evil, for the sake of those demands. By God's submitting to an evil is meant, his consenting that a thing should take place, which must be, in its own nature, disagreeable to his benevolent heart, if viewed independently of all other things. The misery of mankind, which would have been the effect of the execution of the law, would have been such an evil. If, when mankind sinned, God had been entirely destitute of benevolent and compassionate feelings towards them, so that their misery would not have been an evil in his view, he would not, in this case, have

manifested respect for his law, by executing its penalty upon them. But if he felt really benevolent and compassionate towards them, so that their misery appeared, in his view, to be a great evil ; and if, with such feelings respecting their misery, he had proceeded to execute the penalty on them, he would have shown great respect for his law. Suppose that, when mankind sinned, it had been evident to all intelligent creatures that God felt indifferently towards them, whether they should be happy or miserable ; that their happiness and misery, considered in themselves, were equally desirable, so that, independently of the demands of his law, and all consequences to the universe, he was no more inclined to make them happy than to make them miserable ; is it conceivable that, in this case, his executing the penalty annexed to transgression, would have manifested any respect for his law ? But, on the other hand, suppose it was evident that his feelings towards them were benevolent, and he was disposed to do them good if it could be done with propriety ; that he was possessed of kindness and compassion towards them, so that their misery must be, in his view, a great evil considered in itself ; and that, notwithstanding these feelings, he had made them miserable, because his law demanded it, is it not evident that he would have manifested great respect for his law ? If, then, God had executed the penalty of his law, it is obvious his manifestation of respect to it would have consisted in his submitting to an evil on account of it.

This may be illustrated by an easy comparison. Suppose a king should enact a law against some particular kind of wickedness, and should threaten every transgressor with death. Suppose, further, that the first transgressor is one of his favorite generals ; one whom the king loves, as is evident to all his subjects, with a peculiarly tender affection. Now let the king proceed to execute the threatening, and take the life of the transgressor, and it is plain, that he would manifest great respect for his law. None would doubt, in this case, whether he were disposed to treat his law with respect. They would see the highest proof of it. This evidence, too, would result from his having submitted to a great evil, rather than not execute his law. And, as his manifestation of respect for his law would consist in his willingness to submit to an evil rather than that the law should not be executed, it must be obvious, that the greater the evil is to which he would submit rather than not execute the law, the greater would be the manifestation of respect for his law. But if the first transgressor, instead of being a great favorite, should be one whom the king is known to hate ; one against whom it is evident he wishes to find some occasion to take his life ; and should he, under these circumstances, proceed against the offender and cause the law to be executed, this surely would be no manifestation of respect for the law.

However much the king might really respect his law, yet, since it is well known that he wished for some occasion to take the life of the hated person, he would not, by actually taking it, discover any respect for his law; because, in this case, he would have conducted towards the transgressor in precisely the same manner, if, in truth, he had been entirely regardless of his law. Though he executes his law, he does not, for the sake of executing it, submit to any evil. For the same reason, if, when mankind transgressed, God had not viewed their misery as an evil, he could not have manifested respect for his law, by executing upon them its penalty.

From the foregoing reasoning it must clearly follow, that whatever evil God has submitted to on account of his law, must manifest his respect for it. If, then, the sufferings of Christ were really an evil in the sight of God, and he submitted to them on account of his law, it must be evident that they are sufficient to show his respect for his law.* It cannot admit of a rational doubt, that the sufferings of Christ were a great evil in the sight of God. His sufferings were of the most ignominious and painful nature. Considered in themselves, his sufferings must have been an evil of very great magnitude. And as Christ was the only begotten and well-beloved Son of God, these sufferings must have been an evil, in his view, peculiarly great. Hence, for God to submit to such an evil, on account of his law, must be a manifestation of respect to it exceedingly great. Thus we see that the sufferings of Christ are sufficient to manifest God's respect for his law.

But it may still be asked, whether it appears that the sufferings of Christ manifested, on the part of God, as much respect for the law, as the execution of the penalty would have done? Are the sufferings of Christ as great an evil, in themselves considered, as the misery of all mankind would have been?

To this it may be replied, that it is not necessary. It is not necessary that the sufferings of Christ should be, in themselves considered, so great an evil in the view of God, as the misery of all mankind would have

* Any thing which would manifest God's displeasure against sin would show his respect for his law. No sacrifice, however, could manifest such displeasure, unless it involved some natural evil; and that evil would be the precise thing which would manifest the displeasure. This sentiment is correctly expressed by Hampton, in his "Candid remarks on the doctrine of atonement." His words are (replying to Taylor), "I must freely confess, notwithstanding what you have said, No. 160, that I cannot see (at present however) that any sacrifice for sin can be an indication of the divine displeasure against it, any otherwise than as it implies, in one respect or another, some suffering or loss upon account of it; which suffering or loss, therefore, must be the thing which shows that displeasure against it." — *Taylor and Hampton on the Atonement*, p. 285.

been. It is sufficient if God shows as much respect to his law, by the sufferings of Christ, as he would have done by the execution of the penalty on mankind. To this end, all that could be necessary was, that the sufferings of Christ should be, evidently, as great an evil in the view of God, as the misery of mankind could have been manifested to be, in case the penalty of the law had been executed upon them. If the penalty had been executed upon them, it never could have been known, how great an evil their misery was in his view; because, in that case, it never could have been known how much he loved them. It is plain that their misery, which would have resulted from the execution of the law, would have been an evil, in his view, great in proportion to the strength of his benevolence. Of course this evil must appear to other beings great, in proportion to their apprehension of the strength of his benevolence. But the strength of God's benevolence towards sinners never could have been manifested to the degree in which it now appears, if the penalty of the law had been executed. For it is only in the sufferings of Christ for sinners that divine love appears in its glorious fulness. It was in Christ's dying "for us, while we were yet sinners," that God commended "his love towards us." Rom. 5: 8. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John 4: 9. Other beings, therefore, would never have known how "God loved the world," if he had not given his only begotten Son to die on the cross for sinners.

It hence follows, that if the penalty of the law had been executed, God would not have manifested that the misery of mankind was an evil, in his view, in any measure so great, as it now appears to be in view of what Christ has suffered. And yet, executing the penalty would have been all that the law required. By doing it, God would have submitted to an evil sufficiently great, in the apprehension of other intelligent beings, to have manifested all that respect for the law which the circumstances of the case required.

It is not necessary, therefore, that the sufferings of Christ should appear to be so great an evil, in his view, as he has now manifested the misery of mankind to be; but only as great as he would have manifested it to be if Christ had not suffered. If this is done, God will manifest as much respect for his law, by the sufferings of Christ, as he could have done by the execution of the penalty on sinners, although the real evil, in the former case, is less than in the latter. That the sufferings of Christ are as great an evil, in the view of God, as he could have manifested the misery of mankind to be if Christ had not suffered, must be evident to every one who considers that his

sufferings were the painful and shameful sufferings of the well beloved of the Father.*

Thus we see that the sufferings of Christ may be sufficient to manifest, on the part of God, as much respect to his law as the full execution of the penalty would have done. In view of Christ's sufferings, therefore, God may be just to his law, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Thus far the sufferings of Christ most amply meet the necessity of atonement.

2. Does it appear that God could be just to his kingdom in pardoning sinners out of respect to the sufferings of Christ? Will the sufferings of Christ be as effectual in deterring the subjects of divine government from disobedience, as the execution of the penalty of the law would have been?

A satisfactory answer to this inquiry may be easily given. It cannot be difficult to show why the execution of the penalty of the law would have had a tendency to restrain and deter others from disobedience. This being done, it will be easy to show that for precisely the same reason the sufferings of Christ are sufficient to secure the same end.

If God had executed his law on mankind when they sinned, other moral beings would have seen that he was determined to support his law. The execution of the penalty would have appeared to them a great evil; and it would have appeared to be their unavoidable portion, should they follow the example of guilty man. Hence they would be afraid to sin. But certainly the sufferings of Christ must be calculated to produce the same effects in their minds. When they saw that Christ must undergo such dreadful sufferings that rebel man might be pardoned, they would

* "The same measure of natural evil, the same quantity of pain, is expressive of very different degrees of displeasure, according to the difference of character and dignity in the person on whom it is inflicted. For a king to imprison his son for a crime, awes his subjects more than the execution of a common felon, and may do more to establish his authority, and gain respect to his government. The reason is, that his regards to the rights of government are more strongly painted in the former case than in the latter. So for God to inflict pain on a mere man, would naturally express displeasure to spectators: but if the same degree of natural evil brought on him who is his fellow, his anger would glow in brighter and more awful colors, and strike the spectators with a reverence and fear which the other instance could not beget." — *West on Atonement*, p. 73.

The correctness of the sentiment expressed in the foregoing quotation is very obvious. No one will doubt the statement, that if a king should imprison his son for a crime, it would awe his subjects more than it would if he should execute a common felon, and that it would do more to establish his authority, and gain respect to his government. No one will doubt that his regards to the rights of government would be more strongly painted in the former case than in the latter; and for this very obvious reason, he would be considered as submitting to a much greater evil, in the imprisonment of his son, than he would in the execution of the felon.

clearly see that God was determined to support his law. Considering the infinite dignity and excellency of Christ's person, his sufferings would appear to them an infinite evil. Hence they would fear that the evil threatened in the law would unavoidably fall on themselves, should they dare to transgress; and especially after such a solemn warning. When the Jews were leading our Saviour to Mount Calvary, to crucify him, he said, "If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" If Christ, a perfectly innocent and holy being, when acting the part of a Mediator between God and sinners must endure such dreadful sufferings, what may incorrigible offenders expect? The reflection is certainly natural. Since God would not show favor to sinners unless his beloved Son, who was infinitely holy, would die for them, those who continue in their sins cannot rationally hope to escape condign punishment. The sufferings of Christ, therefore, must have the same effect in deterring others from disobedience, which the full execution of the penalty of the law would have had.

Should it be asked how the sufferings of Christ can be as effectual in deterring others from sin as the execution of the law would have been, since the execution of the law would have been really the greatest evil, the answer, which has already been given to a similar question, must be virtually repeated. If the foregoing reasoning is correct, the execution of the law would have tended to deter other beings from transgression, because it would have shown them God's determination to maintain good government, notwithstanding the dreadful evils in which it might involve the guilty.

The more exalted their apprehensions might be of his benevolence, the more effectually would the execution of his law convince them of his inflexible determination to restrain wickedness. Because the more benevolent he might be, the greater would be his unwillingness to make his creatures miserable. His benevolence would render their misery, in his view, a great evil. It would be such an evil as his benevolence would never consent should take place, unless, in his apprehension, the circumstances of the case rendered it indispensably necessary. In the execution of the law he would submit to a great evil for the sake of deterring others from transgression. And the greater that evil might be, the more irresistible would be the evidence which would result from it, that the guilty must suffer. Intelligent beings, then, would feel the force of this restraint (not necessarily, according to the real greatness of the evil to which God would submit, but) exactly in proportion to their apprehension of the greatness of it. All that is necessary, then, in order that the sufferings of Christ may be as effectual in deterring others from transgression as the execution of the law would have been, is, that his sufferings should be

evidently as great an evil, in the view of God, as the misery of mankind could have been manifested to be, in case the penalty of the law had been executed. If the penalty had been executed, however, it never could have been known how great an evil their misery was, in his view, because in that case it could not have been known how much he loved them. It is not necessary, therefore, that the sufferings of Christ should appear to be so great an evil in the view of God, as he has now manifested the misery of mankind to be ; but only as great as he would have manifested it to be, if Christ had not suffered. If this is done, other intelligent beings will be as effectually deterred from transgressing the law, by the sufferings of Christ as an atonement, as they could have been by the execution of the penalty on sinners, although the real evil in the former case is less than in the latter. In view of the sufferings of Christ, therefore, God may be just to his kingdom, and "the justifier of" sinners who believe in Jesus. In this respect, also, the sufferings of Christ amply meet all the necessities of atonement. But,

3. Do the sufferings of Christ manifest God's regard for holiness, and hatred of sin, so that, out of respect to these sufferings, he can be just to himself in pardoning sinners?

Most certainly. If it be asked how, the answer is, In the same way that the execution of the law would have done it. If Christ, the beloved of the Father, must shed his blood in order that sin may be pardoned, it proves that God is irreconcilably opposed to it, as clearly and as fully as this could have been done by the execution of the penalty of the law on mankind. If the misery of mankind which the execution of the penalty of the law must have occasioned, being a great evil, was capable of manifesting God's abhorrence of sin ; then, for the same reason, the sufferings of Christ must be capable of manifesting his abhorrence of sin ; for these are, also, a great evil.

It is most evident, from Scripture, that our Lord's sufferings and death were indications of divine displeasure against sinners. The Scriptures abundantly teach that it was God who brought the sufferings of Christ upon him. He was the great agent, and wicked men and devils were only instruments in his hand. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief." Isa. 53 : 6, 10. Natural evil is that which God uses to show his displeasure against his disobedient creatures. Now, if God was not displeased, why did he bring the most exquisite sufferings upon his beloved Son? Nothing can be more certain, however, than that God was not displeased with Christ himself, when these sufferings were inflicted. Never was the Son more an object of the Father's complacency, than at the very moment when he was expiring, in excruciating anguish, upon

the cross. Hence, the Scriptures teach us, that on account of these very sufferings, he is raised to distinguished glory. Because "he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2: 8-11. But if God was not displeased with his beloved Son, then, unquestionably, he was displeased with sinners, for whose transgressions Christ "was wounded," for whose "iniquities" he "was bruised." For that he was really displeased is certain. Accordingly, in the sufferings he inflicted upon our blessed Saviour, he is represented as making use of such instruments as express anger, as a "rod," and a "sword;" "Awake, O sword,—smite the shepherd." Zech. 13: 7. Here God is figuratively represented as striking and smiting his Son with a rod, and a sword, as a man smites his enemy. The circumstances attending his death, also, indicate the divine displeasure. He was left of God to the rage of his enemies; to their bitter reproaches, and cruel insults. He was even denied the common civilities paid to the worst criminals. When in the most excruciating pain on the cross, and surrounded by insulting foes, he exclaimed, in the agony of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Since it cannot be admitted that these memorable words of our expiring Lord expressed any sense of divine displeasure against himself, they must necessarily be understood, as importing the overwhelming sense which he had of God's anger against sinners, on whose account he was then delivered up to death.* It is certain that the Father did, in some sense, forsake the Son, when in the most critical and awful situation imaginable, when expiring in the utmost agony for a sinful world; for this Christ asserts. It is certain, too, that this was something which he considered a dreadful evil. But if God were not displeased, why did he give up the beloved Son to such a cruel death? Why did he, in any sense, forsake him in this critical and awful moment? Let any one candidly consider, that all the evils which Christ endured, were brought on him by the Father; that God is represented as the prime agent in the surprising work; as using hostile weapons; as chastising and correcting with a rod and a sword; let him behold the tremendous scene on Mount Calvary, and hear the groans of our expiring Lord; and let him recollect that he thus suffered and died for sinners; and, surely, he cannot fail of seeing a most striking manifestation of God's opposition to

* "The atonement," says MAGEE, p. 36, "on the part of God, becomes a public declaration of his holy displeasure against sin."

sin. He must perceive as much opposition to sin manifested on the part of God, as the misery of mankind could ever have manifested.

Here, again, it can be no valid objection that the misery of mankind which the execution of the law must have involved, would really have been, in itself, the greatest evil; because, as already shown, it never could have been manifested that it was the greatest evil, in the view of God, if Christ had not suffered. Still, therefore, the sufferings of Christ must be capable of manifesting as much opposition to sin, on the part of God, as the sufferings of mankind could ever have manifested. But if God is opposed to sin, he must regard holiness. The sufferings of Christ, in this way, fully manifest the wisdom and consistency of divine conduct in giving the law. In view of Christ's sufferings, therefore, God may be just to himself, and yet be "the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Thus it appears that the sufferings of Christ most fully meet all the necessities of atonement; that is, answer the same valuable purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered.*

Various similitudes have been used by writers on this subject for the purpose of illustration. But, perhaps, no one is more pertinent, or has been oftener repeated, than the story of the atonement which Zaleucus made for his son. Zaleucus enacted a law against adultery. To give it authority, that it might answer the end for which it was enacted, he enforced it with a penalty. He threatened the transgressor with the loss of both his eyes. His own son transgressed. Zaleucus loved his son, felt compassionate towards him, and desired to pardon him, provided certain difficulties, which stood in the way, could be removed. These obstacles were similar to those which, as we have seen, stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners.

1. Zaleucus perceived that if he should pardon his son without doing any thing to answer the demands of the law, he would treat his law as if it were not good, and would not show it that respect which it deserved. In order, therefore, to be just to his law, he found he must put out the eyes of his son, unless something else could be done, which, as a substitute, would show equal respect for his law, and equally tend to support its authority.

* "On the whole, the Scripture represents the atonement which Christ has made, by which sinners are delivered from the curse of the law, the wrath to come, to consist wholly in his suffering unto death for their sins, by which he suffered the evil which the law threatens for sin, or a complete equivalent, so as fully to answer the end of the threatening of the law, and all the purposes of moral government, consistent with the pardon of the sinner, as much as if the curse had been executed on the transgressor: and that this was one great, and the most important, essential and difficult part of the work of the Redeemer, and really implies the whole." — *Hopkins's System*, pt. 2, p. 475.

2. Zaleucus perceived that if adultery was not checked, it would greatly disturb the peace and mar the happiness of his kingdom. He also knew that nothing was so well calculated to restrain his subjects from this crime, as the prompt execution of cogent laws. And he knew, moreover, that if he should pardon his son without any thing to express his abhorrence of his son's crime, this would have no tendency to deter others from the like offence but would rather greatly encourage them in it. Thus he perceived that the peace and happiness, if not even the very existence of his kingdom, depended much on the execution of his law; so that if he would be just to his kingdom, and do what was incumbent on him to promote its happiness, he must proceed against his son and execute the penalty of his law upon him, unless something could be done, which, as a substitute, would be equally effectual in deterring others from the like disobedience.

3. Another difficulty stood in the way of pardon. Zaleucus was really opposed to adultery, as his law declared him to be. He knew, therefore, that he could not be just to his own character, unless he manifested his hatred of this crime. If he proceeded against his son in the execution of the law, and put out his eyes, this would manifest this hatred. But if he granted a pardon without showing his hatred of adultery in some other way, it could not appear that he did hate it. Hence he found it was absolutely necessary, in order to do justice to his own character, that the penalty of the law should be executed upon his son, unless something could be done which, as a substitute, would equally manifest his hatred of his son's crime.

Zaleucus, it appears, was determined to show respect for his law; to do what he could to deter others from disobedience; and to show to his subjects his hatred of adultery, even at the expense of his son's eyes, unless it could be done as fully some other way. But if all this could be as completely effected in any other way, he was anxious to spare his son. That he might secure all these ends and be just to his law, to his kingdom, and to himself, and at the same time spare his son from total blindness, Zaleucus caused one of his own eyes to be put out, and one of his son's. But how does it appear that this would answer the purposes designed? Particularly,

1. How could Zaleucus in this way manifest respect for his law?

The answer is, in the same way precisely in which he would have manifested respect for his law, if he had caused the penalty to be literally executed upon his son. If he had caused his son's eyes to be put out, his manifestation of respect for his law would evidently have consisted in his appearing to be willing to submit to an evil on account of its demands. But in causing one of his own eyes to be put out that

one of his son's eyes might be spared, he surely manifested an equal willingness to submit to an evil on account of his law. This, therefore, was as capable of showing respect for his law as the other. When his subjects perceived that he would not so much as spare one of the eyes of his son but at the expense of one of his own, they could not fail of being impressed with the idea, that he had great respect for his law; because they could not but perceive that he was willing, on account of his law, to submit to a great evil. It matters nothing as to the respect shown to the law, whether the evil consisted in one thing or another, provided it was a real evil, and was submitted to on account of the law. Zaleucus, therefore, in what he did, manifested great respect for his law. It is evident, however, that the real evil in this case was not so great as must have been suffered if the penalty of the law had been literally executed; for it is not so great an evil, in itself considered, for two men to lose one eye each, as it would be for one to lose both eyes. Yet it seems evident, that Zaleucus manifested as much respect for his law as he could possibly have manifested by causing the law to be executed literally on his son.

The reason is obvious. He submitted to an evil which, every one must see, could not be otherwise than very great in his view, because it inflicted severe pain and loss upon himself. Whereas, if he had executed the law upon his son, his subjects could not have known how great that evil was in his view, because they would not have known how much he loved him. If he had not felt an uncommon degree of love for his guilty son, he would probably have chosen to execute the law, rather than adopt the expedient so painful to himself. If his love for his son had been only of an ordinary character, he would, in all probability, have considered the execution of the law a smaller evil than that to which he actually submitted. If he had executed his law, his subjects would have had no reason to believe that he had any more love for his son than the ordinary affections of a parent. Indeed, this would have been enough to have rendered the execution of the penalty a sufficient exhibition of respect for the law. But it seems he had more than the ordinary affections of a parent. His love was peculiarly strong. Indeed, it was so wonderful, that he chose to inflict severe pain upon himself, rather than execute the full penalty upon his son. It was his uncommon love for his son which rendered the expedient he adopted the smallest evil in his view; while, at the same time, it was the adoption of the expedient which developed the existence of his uncommon affection for his son, in the view of his subjects. It is not necessary, therefore, that the expedient adopted of destroying one of his own eyes, for the sake of saving one of his son's, should be so great an evil in his view,

as he has now manifested, that the loss of both his son's eyes would have been ; but only as great as he would have manifested it to be, in case he had executed the law upon his son, and, of consequence, made no disclosure of uncommon affection for him.

Suppose another king, in a neighboring kingdom, had enacted precisely such a law as Zaleucus did. Suppose that his son, also, had transgressed. And suppose that he had proceeded against his son according to the letter of the law, and caused both his eyes to be put out. Would this king have manifested a willingness to submit to a greater evil than that to which Zaleucus submitted ? Is it not evident, on the contrary, that if Zaleucus had loved his son no more than this other king would have appeared to love his, he, too, would have spared his own eye, and caused his law to be literally executed, and both the eyes of his son to be put out ? On the whole, is it not plain that Zaleucus manifested, at least, as much respect for his law in saving one of his son's eyes at the expense of one of his own, as he could have done by causing the law to be literally executed ?

2. How could Zaleucus, in this way, as effectually deter others from the crime of adultery, as he would by the strict execution of the penalty of the law ?

To this it may be answered, that when his subjects perceived that he would not even spare his own son, in any other way than that of submitting to so great an evil, they would certainly possess the highest evidence that he was determined, at all events, to support the authority of his law. They would have as much evidence of this, as even the execution of the penalty upon his son could have given them. Hence, so far as the authority of law could restrain, they would be effectually restrained from the prohibited crime. Nor is it less evident,

3. That what Zaleucus did, would manifest his utter abhorrence of the sin of adultery. It must have manifested his irreconcilable hatred of it as fully as the literal execution of his law, even upon his own son, could possibly have done it.

Hence it is evident, that Zaleucus might be just to his law, to his kingdom, and to himself, in pardoning his beloved, though guilty son, out of respect to his own sufferings.

CHAPTER IV.

WHETHER THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST CONSTITUTES ANY PART OF THE ATONEMENT.

IN order to show in what the atonement of Christ consists, it has been judged that two inquiries, and only two, would be necessary. Two inquiries, one concerning Christ's sufferings, and another concerning his obedience, must be necessary, because his sufferings and his obedience are distinct things;* and they are sufficient, because these two things comprise all which Christ ever did in this world. That it might be ascertained clearly whether the atonement made by Christ consisted entirely in his sufferings, or entirely in his obedience, or partly in one and partly in the other, it has been judged needful to compare severally his sufferings and his obedience with what rendered an atonement necessary. The first inquiry has been made, the comparison instituted, and the result seen. It has been found, that the sufferings of Christ fully answer all the ends for which atonement was necessary; they remove all the obstacles which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners; they answer the same valuable purposes which the literal execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. It clearly results, therefore, that the atonement of Christ might consist entirely in his sufferings. If, however, under the second inquiry, in comparing the obedience of Christ with what rendered an atonement necessary, it should appear that this, also, removes the obstacles which stood in the

* Obedience to the moral law is here intended.

There are several passages of Scripture in which Christ is spoken of as being obedient, where it is evident no reference is had to any requirement of the moral law. It is represented that he received a commandment to lay down his life, and that in dying he was obedient to the command of the Father. In Phil. 2: 8, Paul says he "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" which certainly can have no reference to any requirement of the moral law. Also, in Rom. 5: 19, the term obedience is used with evidently the same meaning. Christ received a great commission or command from the Father to come and redeem sinners. His coming to redeem them would constitute obedience to that command. But it certainly would not imply the manner in which they were to be redeemed. Suppose the commandment he received from the Father was to come and redeem sinners, by mere sufferings on the cross, would it not then be perfectly proper and natural to say that he "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?" Would it not also be perfectly proper and natural to say (especially if drawing a parallel between the first and second Adam), "so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The obedience of Christ in this sense may truly be said to comprise all that he ever did in this world. In this sense, therefore, his obedience is not to be considered in distinction from his sufferings, or from any action of his life.

way of the pardon of sinners, and answers the valuable purposes which the complete literal execution of the penalty of the law would have answered, it would seem to be reasonable to conclude, that the atonement consisted partly in obedience and partly in sufferings. But if, instead of this, it should appear clearly that the obedience of Christ does not answer those ends for which atonement was necessary, either in whole or in part, then no such conclusion can be reasonably drawn ; but it must follow unavoidably, that the atonement of Christ not only might, but actually did, consist wholly in his sufferings.

In making the proposed inquiry, the obstacles which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners without an atonement, or, what rendered an atonement necessary, should be kept steadily in view.

1. The law of God threatened transgressors with eternal punishment ; and this law being just, and deserving of respect, must be fully supported.

2. The well-being of God's kingdom requires that disobedience should be totally discountenanced, in order to which it is necessary that the laws of the kingdom be thoroughly executed.

3. God loves holiness, and is infinitely opposed to sin ; and it is necessary, in order to display his true character, that this should be manifested. But if God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he could neither have supported his law, discountenanced wickedness, nor manifested his abhorrence of sin, and love of holiness. Hence if sinners were pardoned, an atonement was indispensably necessary.

If God had literally executed the penalty of his law on transgressors, he would have been just to his law, his kingdom, and his own character. And if he pardoned sinners he must do it in a way which is consistent with his being equally just in each of these respects. The atonement, therefore, must consist in something which answers all these purposes as fully as they would have been answered by the complete execution of the penalty of the law. It must manifest, on the part of God, as high respect for the law, and do as much to support its authority ; it must be calculated as effectually to discountenance disobedience ; and it must manifest God's regard for holiness, and his hatred of sin, as fully as the complete execution of the law would have done ; otherwise it would be really no atonement ; it would not open a way in which God might be just to his law, his kingdom, or his own character, in pardoning sinners. But could the obedience of Christ answer all or even any of these ends ?

1. Could God have been just to his law in pardoning sinners out of respect to Christ's obedience ? Does the obedience of Christ manifest God's respect for his law as fully as the execution of its penalty on the transgressor would have done ?

If it has been clearly shown how God would have manifested respect

for his law, if he had executed its penalty, and in what such a manifestation of respect must have consisted, the inquiries now proposed may be easily answered. It may easily be shown with equal clearness whether the obedience of Christ is sufficient to manifest the same respect. It must be carefully remembered here, that, if the execution of the penalty of the law on transgressors had not involved a real evil in the view of God, his causing it to be executed could not have manifested any respect for his law. In case of the execution of the penalty, the manifestation of respect would not have consisted in merely satisfying its literal demands, but rather, in submitting to an evil, for the sake of satisfying those demands. Though it has been shown already, it may not be useless to repeat, that if, when mankind sinned, God had not felt compassionate towards them; if he had been actuated by no benevolence, so that their punishment and misery would not have been an evil in his view, he could not, in this case, have manifested any respect for his law, by executing its penalty upon them. But if he felt benevolent towards them, so that their misery appeared to him a great evil; if, in this view of their misery, he had proceeded to execute the penalty of his law upon them, it is plain he would have shown great respect for his law.

Since, then, it appears plain, that God could no otherwise manifest respect for his law, in executing its penalty, and making the transgressor miserable, than by submitting to what he evidently viewed as an evil, how is it possible that his respect for his law could be manifested by the obedience of Christ? Was that an evil? Was it, could it possibly be, a great evil in the view of God? How could Christ, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled," do any otherwise than obey? Would he not have obeyed perfectly if he had come into the world for any other purpose? If he had not obeyed, would not this have constituted him a sinner, and brought him into a state in which, instead of procuring pardon for others, he would have needed it for himself?* Was his obedience more than

* It is evident that if Christ had not fully obeyed the law, after he was made under it, he would necessarily have disobeyed it. If he had disobeyed, his disobedience would have been a practical justification of sinners, and a disapprobation of God's requirements. Hence appears the necessity there was of his perfect obedience for himself; for "without this it could not have appeared that Christ in every thing justified God, and wholly condemned the sinner. And had not the man Jesus Christ most perfectly justified God, and condemned the sinner, his offering up himself upon the cross, instead of being a sweet incense, would only have been falling a victim to the just indignation of his injured sovereign." — *West on Atonement* p. 69.

If it should be thought that Christ's obedience must have constituted some part of the atonement, because it made him a more excellent being; it may be answered, his wisdom made him a more excellent being; so did his power; but neither constituted any part of atonement.

perfect? Could it have been less? Christ obeyed the divine law, and thus showed it his respect. But how does this manifest God's respect for the law? Angels, too, obey the law perfectly, and thus show it their respect. But this no more proves that God respects the law, than the disobedience of angels and men proves that God is disposed to treat his law with disrespect. If the obedience of Christ be not an evil, in the view of God, it is not seen how it can manifest his respect for his law, so as to constitute an atonement, out of respect to which he can be just to his law in pardoning sinners.

2. Can God be just to his kingdom in pardoning sinners out of respect to the obedience of Christ? Can the obedience of Christ possibly be as effectual in discountenancing wickedness, as the execution of the penalty of the law would have been? It can scarcely be pretended.

If when mankind felt God had executed the penalty upon them, this would have given other moral beings evidence that he was determined to support his law. The evil, involved in the execution of the penalty, would have appeared to them great; and they would have concluded that it must be their unavoidable portion in case they should transgress. Convinced of the divine determination to punish transgressors, they would have been under a powerful restraint. But can it be supposed that the obedience of Christ is calculated to produce the same effect? How can it? What can the obedience of Christ do towards convincing moral beings that God is determined to support his law? Moral beings, who have never sinned, do not consider obedience to God an evil. So far from it obedience is, in their view, a great good. It is delightful to obey themselves, and to see others obey. The obedience of Christ, therefore, is not calculated effectually to deter moral beings from sin. It may, indeed, by way of example allure the righteous to press forward in obedience. But, certainly, it cannot impose any restraint upon the ill disposed. It cannot produce any such effect upon them as would have been produced by the execution of the penalty of the law. It cannot, therefore, answer the same valuable purposes in relation to the support of government. Of consequence, it could not make any atonement, out of regard to which God can be just to his kingdom in pardoning sinners. That it might be a satisfactory atonement, it must be calculated to deter others from disobedience as effectually as the full execution of the penalty of the law would have done. So far as it falls short of this, it must be utterly inadequate to the purposes of atonement. But since the obedience of Christ cannot be viewed, by holy beings, as an evil, or any token of the divine displeasure, it must be obvious, that it cannot have this tendency in any degree. Hence it is evident, that it must be utterly insufficient to constitute any part of the atonement.

Suppose, for further illustration, that one law of a certain family is, that one child of the family shall attend school, unavoidable hinderances excepted, every day ; and that if he needlessly absent himself, he shall feel the rod, as a punishment for his disobedience. After a time, however, the child becomes weary of his school, and, instead of attending according to the command of the parent, spends several days in play or idleness. The parent, informed of the transgression, calls the child to account. He is convicted, and the parent prepares to inflict the punishment. At this instant another child of the family intercedes for the offender, and offers to make satisfaction. Being asked how, he replies, that he will attend the school himself, as many days as the delinquent has been absent. Now if the parent should accept the offered satisfaction, and dismiss the offender, would this support the law of the family ? Would it be calculated, effectually, to deter the child from future disobedience ? Would it convince the rest of the family that punishment must be the certain portion of the disobedient ? Would it effectually restrain them from trifling with the laws of the family ? It cannot be pretended. With as much propriety might a criminal, convicted of murder, be pardoned out of regard to the intercession of some kind and benevolent friend, whose intercessory plea might be, that he, himself, had never murdered.

3. Neither can God be just to himself, in pardoning sinners, out of respect to the obedience of Christ. The reason is obvious. The obedience of Christ cannot make a manifestation of God's hatred of sin, and regard to holiness, to that extent, which would have resulted from an execution of the penalty of the law. Nor is it very conceivable how the obedience of Christ should manifest God's abhorrence of sin, and love for holiness, to any extent, beyond what appears from his giving the law at first. If the obedience of Christ is considered, as perhaps it ought, merely in relation to his human nature, it does not appear that it is capable, any more than the obedience of angels or men, of showing what God's feelings are towards holiness and sin. In this sense it is true, when Christ obeyed he manifested his regard for holiness. And it is equally true, that the obedience of angels manifests their regard for holiness. But neither the one nor the other furnishes evidence that God regards it. If, however, one could, the other must, for the same reason ; and, of course, the mission of Christ must have been altogether unnecessary ; because the obedience of angels would have answered the same purpose. Nothing can be plainer than this, that the obedience of one being cannot manifest the opposition of another being to disobedience. If it could, then a judge might pardon every criminal, because some honest man had not transgressed the same law ; and, at the same time,

make a full display of his hatred to disobedience, than which nothing can be more absurd.

In favor of considering Christ's obedience to the law, in relation to his human nature merely, it may be observed, that, in his divine nature, he was the lawgiver. And obedience to a law always supposes a previous obligation to the lawgiver. Hence it would seem that Christ, in his divine nature, could not have been under the law, at least in the same sense that men are. In his divine nature, therefore, he could not have rendered precisely that obedience which man failed to render. Neither can it be supposed, that, in his divine nature, when he was incarnate, he obeyed the divine law in any sense different from that in which God has obeyed it from eternity. It is not seen, therefore, how Christ's obedience to the law could manifest God's regard for holiness, on account of his personal union of the divine and human natures, any more than if no such union had existed. It is not necessary, however, that this point should be urged. Let it be admitted that Christ, even in his divine nature, was made under the law; that Deity in his person, in a strict and proper sense, assumed all the obligations which the divine law imposes on men, and discharged them, and still it could not be shown that this proves God's regard for holiness. If giving the law did not manifest a regard for holiness, certainly obeying it cannot. For if God might be supposed to give the law, from any other motives than a regard to holiness, he certainly might be supposed to obey it, from the same motives. No obedience of Christ, therefore, on account of his being divine, can be a ground for pardoning sinners, any more than his giving the law at first can be a reason for pardoning; that is, a reason why the law ought not to be literally executed; because one no more manifests God's regard for holiness than the other.

How would a king appear who should attempt to justify himself in pardoning every criminal, on the ground that he had never himself transgressed; alleging, that his not transgressing his own law was a sufficient proof that he was utterly opposed to transgression; and that, therefore, he would not punish others? How would this support the authority of his laws? How would it deter his subjects from disobedience? How would he manifest his unshaken attachment to good order among them? Zaleucus enacted a severe law against adultery. His son transgressed. Now what if he had pardoned his son on the ground that himself and others had obeyed the law? Would this have manifested on his part a proper respect for the law? Would it have supported its authority? Would it have had the least tendency to restrain others from the same offence? Would it have manifested any abhorrence of his son's crime? Would his subjects have concluded that Zaleucus was determined, at all

events, to support his law ; that every transgressor must suffer ? It is obvious no such conclusions could be drawn. His obedience could not have been viewed as any atonement whatever. The pretended satisfaction must have appeared to them a mere imposition. They would have viewed it with contempt.

Thus it appears plain, that the obedience of another can be no ground of pardon for an offender. The obedience of Christ is not sufficient to answer any of those purposes for which atonement was necessary, that sinners might be pardoned. It cannot furnish any ground, on which God can be just to his law, to his kingdom, or to his own character, in pardoning the guilty. It appears safe, therefore, to conclude, that it constitutes no part of the atonement. Indeed, it is not possible that any demonstration can be more certain, unless the view which has been given of the reasons why atonement was necessary is altogether incorrect. It is confidently believed, however, that no reasons can be given why an atonement was indispensably necessary, which will not also evince a necessity, equally indispensable, that it should consist in sufferings. Those who have placed the atonement in Christ's obedience, have always found a difficulty in showing why any atonement was necessary. Indeed, that there was any necessity for it, many have actually denied. But unless atonement were necessary, it is inconceivable that a holy and wise God should ever have given up his beloved Son to be a propitiation for sin. And if atonement were necessary, for the reasons which have been assigned, then it is certain that it consisted in sufferings ; because the sufferings of Christ fully meet that necessity, whilst nothing else can answer the purpose.

This doctrine is also abundantly evident from the event of Christ's death. For unless the sufferings of Christ were necessary for an atonement, it must be impossible to show any purpose for which they were necessary. But, certainly, they were necessary for something. Christ, surely, did not die in vain. He never could have willingly consented to the death of the cross, if it had not been to answer some valuable purpose. No man, of even common wisdom and goodness, would willingly consent to great sufferings, unless his sufferings might evidently be productive of great good. Much less can we suppose that Christ, who was infinitely wise and good, would have consented to such sufferings as he sustained, unless it had been for the attainment of some good of proportionable value. But what wise and valuable purpose was answered by his death, if it were not the purpose of atonement ? What was the great good attained by his sufferings and death, unless it were a consistent ground for pardoning sinners ? It is easy to see that his obedience was necessary, even though it constituted no part of the atonement. But his

sufferings could not be necessary on the same ground. His obedience was necessary for himself. Being made under the law, if he had not obeyed, he must have become a sinner. If he had not obeyed, he could not have been the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; he could not have been the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; and instead of being the well-beloved of the Father, he must have incurred his displeasure.

But though his obedience was necessary for himself, his sufferings were altogether voluntary. They could not have been for himself. They must, therefore, have been for the purpose of atonement, or for no purpose of which we are able to conceive. It is inconceivable, moreover, that the Father should have consented to his sufferings on this ground. The Father loved him with peculiar affection. Yet he was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and "by wicked hands" was "crucified and slain." "It pleased the Father to bruise him, and put him to grief; to lay the chastisement of our peace upon him."

Now, how can we possibly account for this, if his sufferings were not necessary for atonement? Are human parents, who tenderly love their children, willing to bruise them and put them to grief, when it is not necessary? Are they willing to give them up to the smiter, and to consent to their death, when it can answer no valuable purpose? How, then, could God, who is infinitely benevolent and compassionate, be willing that his beloved Son should be put to grief, be despised, and even crucified, when it was not necessary? If the sufferings and death of Christ were not necessary to the pardon of sinners, why did not the Father send his angels and deliver him, when he saw the anguish of his soul in the garden, and heard his fervent prayer that, if it were possible, the cup of his afflictions might pass from him?

Besides, the Scriptures are unintelligible if the atonement of Christ consisted in his obedience; for they plainly ascribe it to his sufferings and death. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Pet. 2: 24. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows — He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. 53: 4, 5. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53: 6. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." — "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed — he shall bear their iniquities — and he bare the sins of many." Isa. 53: 10–12. "Who was delivered for our offences." Rom. 4: 25. Nothing can be more plain than these declarations of Scripture.

If language is capable of conveying ideas, these passages certainly prove that the atonement of Christ consisted in his sufferings. In Scripture Christ is frequently called a sacrifice. "For even Christ, our pass-over, is sacrificed for us." 1 Cor. 5 : 7. He is said to have "given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor." And "now once in the end of the world," to have appeared, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." When he is called a sacrifice, reference is evidently had to his shedding his blood. He is the great propitiatory sacrifice to which the Jewish sacrifices pointed. From these sacrifices, too, an undeniable argument may be adduced, in confirmation of the result of the inquiry already made. The Jews were commanded to offer beasts in sacrifice for their sins. These sacrifices were considered as making atonement for the people. "And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. And if his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar. And he shall slay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces, — and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord." Lev. 1 : 1-7, 9.

Thus were the children of Israel commanded concerning their sacrifice for sin; they were to kill the beast, and burn it on the altar; and this sacrifice was to make an atonement for their iniquities. That these sacrifices were designed to prefigure the great propitiatory sacrifice which the Son of God should make of himself, is evident from the account which is given of them in the New Testament; particularly in the epistle to the Hebrews. The apostle calls these sacrifices a shadow of things to come; an example, pattern, and figure; and he refers them to Christ. "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is Christ." Col. 2 : 17. "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." Heb. 8 : 5. "It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." Heb. 9 : 23. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." Heb. 10 : 12. "For such an high-priest became us, — who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice first for

his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself." Heb. 7: 26, 27. From these passages it is evident that the Jewish sacrifices had reference to the sacrifice which Christ would make of himself for the sins of the world. Indeed, they were of little, if any consequence, any further than as they pointed to this great atoning sacrifice. If, then, we can ascertain what it was in the Jewish sacrifices which was considered as making atonement, we may know what constituted the atonement of Christ.

Now, it is evident, the conduct of the priests did not make atonement. They were no more than the instruments by which the atoning sacrifices were offered. This is all that is intended, when they are spoken of as making the atonement. God required that the beasts which were to be offered should be free from blemishes. But the atonement did not consist in this ceremonial purity. This was only a prerequisite. But the atonement consisted in the sacrifice itself; or in the life or blood of the beast which was offered. This God has expressly declared. "And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement." Lev. 16: 27. The children of Israel were forbidden to eat blood; and God assigned this reason for the prohibition, that he had given the blood to make atonement for them. "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Lev. 17: 10, 11. Thus God assures us that it was the life, or blood of the beast offered upon the altar, which made the atonement in the Jewish sacrifices.

This naturally and even necessarily leads us to the conclusion that the atonement of Christ consisted in his offering up his life or shedding his blood; otherwise the Jewish sacrifices were not proper representations of this great propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world. For how could these sacrifices be types, and Christ's sacrifice of himself the antitype, if the atonement by these consisted in shedding blood, but the atonement by Christ in something else? How could these bloody sacrifices be typical of Christ's obedience? On the ground that they were, where would be the resemblance?

It may be further observed, that almost every thing in and about the tabernacle was to be sprinkled with blood, that it might be rendered ceremonially clean. When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book

and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things, by the law, are purged with blood." Heb. 9: 19-22. Particularly, the high-priest could not enter into the holy place, which prefigured heaven, without the purification of blood. Now what could be the design of this ceremonial cleansing by blood? Why could not the high-priest, without being cleansed by blood, enter into the holy of holies? Does not all this teach us that we are cleansed from sin and saved from wrath only by the precious blood of Jesus Christ? Does it not show us that it is only by virtue of his blood that we can ever enter into heaven? Does it not necessarily lead our minds to the blood of Christ as that which alone makes atonement for sin? If it do not, in vain do we attempt to derive any instruction from these things.

This representation also agrees with the general tenor of Scripture on this subject. We have already examined a considerable number of passages, which expressly point us to the death of Christ as that which makes atonement. It may be shown, moreover, from many other Scriptures, that every thing belonging to our salvation which may be considered a fruit of atonement, is also grounded on the love of Christ. If we are redeemed, or bought, the blood of Christ is the price; if we are cleansed, or sanctified, it is by the blood of sprinkling; if we are reconciled, the blood of Christ hath broken down the partition wall. Indeed every blessing of the gospel is a blood-bought blessing.

Christ is abundantly represented as redeeming and purchasing his saints, as captives are redeemed from captivity by the payment of a price. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." Gal. 1: 4. "Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." Eph. 5: 2. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." Tit. 2: 14. "Ye are bought with a price." 1 Cor. 7: 23. These passages have evident reference to the death of Christ as the ransom or price which he gave for us. "The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20: 28. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,—but with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19.

The atonement of Christ is that which lays a foundation for our sanctification and deliverance from sin. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word." Eph. 5: 25, 26. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by

works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Tit. 3: 4, 5. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." John 17: 19. But, according to the voice of inspiration, it is the blood or death of Christ, which is available here. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9: 12. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Heb. 9: 13, 14. "The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary for sin, are burnt without the camp. Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Heb. 13: 11, 12. And agreeably with this, the apostle John says expressly, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." 1 John 1: 7.

It is through the atonement surely, that sinners are brought into a state of reconciliation with God. But this, the Scriptures assure us, is effected by the death or blood of Christ. "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. 5: 10. "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jews and Gentiles] one;—and that he might reconcile both in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Eph. 2: 13, 14, 16. "And having made peace through the blood of his cross." Col. 1: 20. "And you, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh, through death." Col. 1: 21.

The atonement of Christ is certainly that on account of which saints are pardoned and justified. But in the Bible, saints are said to be pardoned and justified by the blood and death of Christ. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Rom. 3: 24, 25. "Being now justified by his blood." Rom. 5: 9. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Eph. 1: 7. Said our Lord at the institution of the ordinance of the supper, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt. 26: 28. And the apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews, declared, "Without shedding of

blood there is no remission." Heb. 9: 22. According to these Scriptures, believers are forgiven and justified solely on account of the death of Christ, or the effusion of his blood as a sacrifice for sin.

Once more. It is evident from the sacred oracles, that all, who obtain salvation, are saved by virtue of Christ's atonement. The whole gospel is proof of this. But there are several passages which very plainly show that salvation is on account of Christ's sufferings and death. "And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions,—they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Heb. 9: 15. "Now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sins by the sacrifice of himself.—Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation;" that is, unto the complete salvation of all that look for him. Heb. 9: 26, 28. "For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.—Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Rom. 5: 6, 9. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us." 1 Thess. 5: 9, 10. Here the apostle plainly tells us, that we receive eternal salvation through Christ, on account of his death. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. For it became him for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. 2: 9, 10. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect [through sufferings], he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Heb. 5: 8, 9. "Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Heb. 10: 19.

In this last passage, we perceive an evident allusion to the high-priest's entering into the most holy place of the tabernacle, through the cleansing of blood. By this, the spirit of inspiration would evidently teach us, that the way in which we must enter into heaven, is by being cleansed in the blood of Christ. Indeed, all these Scriptures direct us to the blood of Christ, as being emphatically that on account of which believers are saved. The redeemed in heaven, undoubtedly, must know precisely what that is, on account of which they are admitted to that blissful world. Yet from a passage in the book of Revelation, which describes their heavenly worship, it appears that they consider the blood of Christ as the foundation of all their glory. "And they sung a new

song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Rev. 5: 9.

Thus the sufferings and death of Christ are singled out in Scripture, and spoken of by way of eminence in a multitude of places, as being the price of our purchase, and as laying a foundation for our sanctification, for our reconciliation to God, for our forgiveness, and, finally, for our eternal salvation in heaven. The sufferings and death of Christ, too, completely secure all the ends for which atonement was necessary; remove all the obstacles which stood in the way of God's showing favor to mankind, and making them eternally happy after they had sinned; and answer all the valuable purposes which could have been answered by the execution of the penalty of the law.

How, then, can there be any room to doubt whether the atonement of Christ consisted in his sufferings and death? Is not this idea plainly supported by all the representations of Scripture on the subject? Indeed, is it possible that the subject should be more plain? Especially, when we reflect that the obedience of Christ does not secure any of the ends which rendered an atonement necessary, as it could not in the nature of things answer the purposes which might have been answered by the execution of the penalty of the law, the very thing which was necessary in order that the penalty might be consistently remitted; and when we consider, moreover, what still more ought to satisfy every believer in revealed religion, that the notion that the atonement of Christ consisted in his obedience, by no means agrees with the uniform voice of inspiration on the subject.

Indeed, it may justly be questioned, whether there is a single passage in the Bible, which fairly implies that the active obedience of Christ constituted any part of the atonement. Perhaps there is no passage more liable to be so understood, than Jer. 23: 6. "This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." But what is there, even in this, which fairly implies that the obedience of Christ constituted the atonement either in whole, or in part? What is there in it which any common reader, unbiassed by preconceived opinions, would be liable to understand in that way? This passage was a mere prediction that a name, by which Christ should be called, would be, "The Lord our righteousness." Undoubtedly, the reason why he should be so called was, because he would make an atonement for his people, and open a consistent way for their pardon and admission into heaven; to that happiness to which they would have been entitled by their own righteousness, if they had never sinned. The passage may be considered as implying this. But it certainly does not give any

intimation concerning the particular thing which Christ would do to make that atonement, or the manner in which he would open that consistent way of pardon. If his atonement had consisted in his active obedience, this text would have given no intimation of it; nor could he, with any more propriety, be called "The Lord our righteousness," than he now can, in view of his sufferings and death. He is, also, said to be made unto his people "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." But, surely, no one would think of arguing from hence, that wisdom constituted any part of the atonement.

Another passage which has been supposed by some to favor the notion that the atonement of Christ consisted in his obedience is, Isaiah 42: 21, "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law and make it honorable." If it were unquestionable that this should be considered as referring to Christ, and should it be granted that he did magnify the law and make it honorable in any sense which may be supposed; still it would by no means follow, that this constituted any part of the atonement. Doubtless our Lord did many things on earth which were never designed as any part of his propitiatory work. So that if all were granted concerning this passage which can reasonably be asked, still it would avail nothing. The needed proof must still be sought somewhere else. Many good critics, however, suppose the passage has no reference to Christ. They think it might be more correctly translated, "Jehovah delighteth in his righteous one; he will prosper and honor his administration." (See also, Poole, *in loc.*) Those who have considered this passage as evidence that the atonement of Christ consisted in his active obedience, have generally supposed that the atonement was necessary to show the justice of the law. They have apprehended that, if God had forgiven sinners without an atonement, the justice of the law could not have appeared; that, therefore, Christ obeyed the law, made it appear just and reasonable, and so made atonement.

Now if it were admitted that an atonement was necessary on this ground, still it would not be easy to see how the obedience of Christ could make the law appear reasonable. If the law were not reasonable in itself, aside from the obedience of Christ, his obedience surely could not make it reasonable. Indeed, unless the law were good, antecedently to his obeying it, there could be no reason why he should obey it, nor any merit in his obedience. The reasonableness of the law, therefore, instead of resting on the obedience of Christ, is itself the very foundation on which the reasonableness of his obedience rests. And if the obedience of Christ did not make the law reasonable, it certainly could not make it appear to be reasonable in the view of creatures. For, if the law appeared to creatures to be unreasonable, they would, of course, perceive no

reason why it should be obeyed by Christ, or by any other being. The truth is, the law is in itself most reasonable ; and nothing more is necessary that creatures may perceive it to be reasonable, than that they should understand those things on which its reasonableness depends. But its reasonableness does not depend on the conduct of any being in the universe, either of God, or of Christ, or of creatures. It depends on what the law itself requires, on the capacities of the beings to whom it is addressed, and the relations they sustain to God and to each other. Only let creatures clearly understand these things, and they could not fail to perceive the perfect reasonableness of the divine law. A little candid and impartial attention to the word of God would teach them this, which, from the mere obedience of Christ, they could never learn.

Another consideration which clearly shows the incorrectness of this scheme is, that it manifestly inverts the order of divine truth. For, if the obedience of Christ makes the law appear reasonable, and so makes atonement, it must certainly follow that instead of discovering the grace of the gospel, in the reasonableness and holiness of the law by which men are condemned, we must go to the gospel itself to learn that the law is reasonable. Besides, if we do not perceive the reasonableness of the law, aside from any consideration of what is contained in the gospel, how can we ever obtain any just views of the gospel ? For, unless the law first appear holy, just, and good, how can we view the gospel as any other than a dispensation designed to deliver us from the unjust punishment of an unreasonable law ? It is evident, therefore, that neither Christ's obedience, nor his atonement, was designed to manifest the reasonableness of the law. So far from this, that the reasonableness of the law is the very foundation of the gospel, and must be perceived before the propriety of that dispensation can be discovered.

Besides, as has been observed, Jesus Christ, both as God and man, was as much bound to obey the law as any other being in the universe. It is true, as God he was not under law in every sense as a creature is ; for there was no being above him to command him, to threaten him with a penalty, or to promise him a reward. Yet he was as really bound by the moral law, that eternal rule of rectitude, as any creature is. It is the glory of the divine Being, that all his feelings and all his conduct are in perfect conformity with this unerring rule. And, as a creature, Jesus Christ was, in every sense, as much bound to obey the law as is any other creature. Neither as God, nor as man, therefore, was he any more holy than he ought to be. How, then, could his obedience, any more than the obedience of any other being, make the law appear reasonable, or make atonement ?

The notion that atonement was necessary to make the law appear

reasonable, is evidently incorrect. No obscurity attending the law presented any obstacle in the way of God's pardoning sinners. The real difficulties which stood in the way of this have been brought into view. But these the obedience of Christ could not remove. If God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he could not have appeared just; he would not have shown that he approved of the law, loved holiness, hated sin, and was determined to maintain good government. How, then, could he omit punishing the transgressors of his law? Here was the necessity of atonement, which Paul stated, "to declare God's righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." What, then, if the obedience of Christ did make the law appear reasonable (which, however, it neither did nor could), how would this remove any difficulty which stood in the way of the salvation of sinners? Surely, God would not show the righteousness of his character by refusing to punish the transgressor of a law which was made to appear so reasonable and good! Hence, it appears, that the scheme which places the atonement in the obedience of Christ, is totally without foundation, either in reason or the word of God.*

* It is true, obedience was implied in Christ's sufferings; not, however, obedience to the moral or ceremonial law; but obedience to a law peculiar to the undertaking of Christ as a Mediator. He had received a commandment from the Father to come and redeem sinners by his death. Dying, therefore, was obeying. Hence the apostle says, he "became obedient unto death;" and also, that "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." But does it hence follow, that atonement consisted in obedience? If so, then it was, in the nature of things, impossible for God to require an atonement which would not consist in obedience. Then, also, it would be using language with propriety to say, "God gave Christ a commandment to come and make an atonement for sin, by suffering the death of the cross; and Christ came and obeyed that commandment; therefore, his atonement consists in obedience." It is presumed, however, that no one would wish to advocate the logical propriety of such a statement. It would certainly be at variance with the common use of language. God has given his ministers a command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; and he has ordained by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. In obedience to this command, ministers go forth and preach, and sinners, who hear and believe the gospel, are saved.

Now, in speaking of their salvation, it would be much more agreeable to the common use of language to say they are saved by the preaching of the gospel, than it would to say they are saved by the obedience of ministers. Paul stated in his defence before Agrippa, that Jesus met him on his way to Damascus and said unto him, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." He then adds, "Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but showed

There is another scheme, which, while it allows that the sufferings of Christ atone for sin, supposes that his active obedience procures heaven for believers, which, with the most important passages adduced to support it, will be considered in another place.

first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

Paul was obedient to the heavenly vision, went to the Gentiles and to the people, and turned them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It would certainly be proper, then, in speaking of his conduct, in relation to his commission, to call it obedience, and to say that by his obedience to the heavenly vision many were made righteous.

But in speaking of his conduct in relation to the effect he produced, when he turned men "from darkness to light," where the question would particularly respect the means by which that effect was produced, it would be more proper to say, it was accomplished by preaching the gospel; or (in the language of Paul himself), by showing "them that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." So, when we speak of the sufferings of Christ, in relation to that commandment which he had received of his Father, to lay down his life, it is certainly proper to call them obedience. But when we speak of the same sufferings, designed particularly as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law, there certainly does not appear the same propriety in using the same language. And this is doubtless the reason why, notwithstanding the multitude of instances in which the sufferings, the blood, and the death of Christ are mentioned in the Scriptures, as the ground of our redemption to God, the subject is so seldom mentioned under the more general term, obedience.

And, moreover, if the foregoing view of the necessity of atonement is correct, that necessity could no more be met by the obedience implied in Christ's sufferings, than it could be by his obedience to the moral law. And for the obvious reason, that it answered no better as a substitute for the execution of the penalty. It did no more to accomplish the valuable purposes which the execution of the law would have accomplished. The good effects which the execution of the penalty of the law would have produced, would have resulted from the evil which it involved. But certainly the sufferings of Christ, considered merely as obedience, involved no evil. As mere obedience, therefore, they made no atonement. It was the bare suffering, the mere evil (in the language of Hampton in reply to Taylor), it was the loss sustained, which answered the valuable purposes, in the support of divine government, &c., which would have resulted from the execution of the law, and which was evidently the only thing necessary in order to the setting aside of that execution.

CHAPTER V.

FULL ATONEMENT, AND SALVATION WHOLLY BY GRACE, CONSISTENT WITH EACH OTHER.

THE Scriptures plainly teach, that though Christ has made a full and complete atonement for sin, yet the salvation of sinners is entirely of grace. "By grace ye are saved." Eph. 2: 5. Many, however, have found it difficult to treat the subject as though these doctrines were reconcilable, the one with the other. But this difficulty has probably arisen from mistaken views of the nature of the atonement which Christ has made. Understanding the atonement to be, literally, a purchase, or the payment of a debt, some have inferred from it, that, since Christ is represented as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, all men must be saved; others, that, inasmuch as it is evident that all will not be saved, the atonement could not be made for all; and others, again, that, if sinners are saved on account of the atonement, their pardon and salvation cannot be of grace.

These conclusions are much more consistent with the premises, from which they are respectively drawn, than either the premises or conclusions are with the truth. For, if the atonement did consist in the payment of a debt literally, it seems very obvious that there could not be any grace exercised in the acquittance of sinners, and that atonement and actual salvation, must be co-extensive. If Christ has really paid the debt of sinners, they, of course, must be free. Justice must be satisfied, and can make no further demand. On this ground it must, indeed, follow, that if Christ died for all, then all will be saved; and that if all are not saved, then he could not have died for all. And it equally follows, that none can be saved by grace. Their debt being paid, it cannot be forgiven.

Since, therefore, the Scriptures represent the pardon and salvation of sinners as being wholly of grace, we may be certain that the atonement cannot be the payment of a debt, nor, strictly, of the nature of a purchase. This, too, it is apprehended, has already been made evident, in what has been shown concerning the necessity and nature of atonement. But since many, at the present day, have adopted this scheme of the atonement, and have deduced sentiments from it which are of the most dangerous tendency, it may not be improper to examine, a little more directly, the reasoning by which they endeavor to make their scheme consistent with the exercise of grace, in the actual bestowment of pardon and salvation.

The Scriptures are so very explicit and particular, respecting the terms of pardon and justification, that few believers in divine revelation can be found, who do not appear anxious to have it understood that, in some way or other, they hold the doctrines of grace. It has been said by some, that though atonement be the payment of a debt, yet the pardon of a sinner may be called an act of grace, because it is founded in other acts, which certainly are acts of grace. God's giving his Son to make atonement, and his actually making it, are acts of grace. And since the pardon of sinners has its foundation on these gracious acts, it may be called an act of grace itself. But this is, certainly, strange reasoning. To say that pardon is an act of grace, only because it is grounded on other acts which are gracious, is nothing less than to say, that it is an act of grace, though it is not an act of grace.

Besides, on the ground of the scheme in question, it is futile to talk of pardon. When a debt is paid, what can remain to be forgiven? The notion, however, is not more inconsistent with itself, than it is with Scripture. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. 1:7. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom. 3:24. These passages of Scripture, and many others of similar import, plainly imply, that forgiveness and justification are themselves acts of grace, and not merely that they are grounded on other acts of this nature.

Nor is this all. Pardon, or forgiveness, in its very nature, implies grace. So far as any crime is pardoned at all, it is pardoned graciously. It is impossible to forgive in any other way. Pardon, on the ground of justice, would be a contradiction in terms. To pardon a sinner is to treat him more favorably than he deserves; to release him from a punishment which he has justly merited; and to confer on him a favor, to which he has no claim. Pardon always implies this. If a criminal be pardoned, he is treated more favorably than he deserves. His release from punishment is a favor which he can have no right to demand. This circumstance, that he cannot demand it, constitutes his release an act of grace; and the same circumstance renders it an act of forgiveness. Without this circumstance, no acquittal can be an act, either of pardon or grace.

Others, again, among those who consider the atonement as the payment of a debt, have attempted to solve the difficulty by saying that, though the pardon of the sinner is not an act of grace to Christ, since he has paid the debt; yet it is an act of grace to the sinner, because the debt was not paid by himself, but by Christ, his surety.

It may be observed in reply, that as to the release of the debtor, it makes no difference who pays the debt. Whoever may make the pay-

ment, if the debt is paid, it can never be forgiven. If a creditor has received payment of his demand, he is under obligation to discharge his debtor, whether he paid the debt himself or some other person paid it for him. This must be evident to every candid mind. No creditor can refuse to give up an obligation after it is fully paid, without the most manifest injustice. But an act of grace is what no being can be under obligation, to him who receives it, to perform. If a being is under obligation to another to perform an act in his favor, that act must be an act of justice, and not of grace. Hence there can be no grace in giving up a demand which is fully satisfied.

What, then, becomes of the boasted arguments of those who plead for universal grace, on the ground that Christ has paid the debt for all men. Alas, what gross delusion! They talk about grace, free grace for all men, and yet exclude every idea of grace in the pardon of sinners, by alleging that Christ has paid their debt. If their debt is paid, they can never be pardoned. But if sinners may be pardoned for Christ's sake, then their debt is not paid; and, consequently, God is under no obligation to exercise pardon on account of the atonement. Thus it appears that the argument for universal salvation, deduced from the notion that Christ has paid the debt for sinners, is totally groundless. Take it which way we will, it is mere delusion.

The truth is, Christ has paid no man's debt. It is true, indeed, that our deliverance is, in Scripture, sometimes called a redemption; and this word refers to the deliverance of a prisoner from captivity, which is often effected by the payment of a sum of money. Christ is also called "a ransom," and we are said to be "bought with a price." But it must be remembered that these are figurative expressions. They are designed to communicate this idea, that as the payment of money as the price of liberty is the ground on which prisoners are released from captivity, so the atonement of Christ is the ground on which sinners are pardoned, or set free from a sentence of condemnation. These passages, thus understood, appear intelligible and consistent; whereas, understood literally, they would contradict other plain declarations of the Word of God. For sinners are certainly represented in Scripture as being pardoned of free grace; which, it is evident, cannot be said with propriety of captives whose liberty is purchased. Besides, these passages literally bring into view the payment of money and the discharge of debt. But surely no one will suppose that sinners have literally plundered the treasury of heaven, and deprived God of property, and that the business of the Redeemer was to refund the money which they had thus wrongfully taken away. We have not been "redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ." It is evident, therefore, that these are

metaphorical expressions, and were never designed to be taken in a sense strictly literal.

The Scriptures, indeed, use a variety of metaphors in describing the necessity and nature of atonement. When sin is represented under a figure, we find the Saviour introduced under a corresponding figure. If sin is a disease, and "the whole head sick, and the heart faint," Christ is a physician. There is balm in Gilead, and a physician there. If sin is hunger and thirst, Christ is the bread and water of life. If sin is error, in a road or path, Christ is then the way. And if sin is a debt, Christ is then a price.

Let passages of this description be understood literally, and they immediately become not only unintelligible, but plainly contradictory. But let them be understood metaphorically, as was evidently designed, and they are intelligible, consistent, and fraught with instruction. If sin is called a disease, we are not to understand that it may be healed as easily as bodily diseases are, or in the same manner; but we are rather to infer, from this representation, the greatness of the evil; and that as diseases of the body which are not healed bring forth, so sin, if it be not destroyed in us, will inevitably issue in a more dreadful death of the immortal soul. If sin be spoken of as a debt, it is not to show us that it may be paid by another; but it is rather to signify to us that our sins render us accountable to God, though not precisely in the same manner, yet as certainly as debtors are to their creditors, and that a day of reckoning must come. If sin is a debt, and also a disease, and Christ a price to pay the debt, and a physician to heal the disease, we are no more authorized to infer that he has paid the debt, than we are to conclude that he has healed the disease, which we know is not the fact. The truth is, neither debt nor disease does specifically describe the nature of sin. Nor does the payment of a debt, nor the healing of a disease, with any greater literal correctness describe the work of the Redeemer.

From what has been shown concerning the necessity and nature of the atonement, it is evident not only that it does not at all consist in the payment of a debt, but that it is perfectly consistent with free grace in the pardon of sinners. Grace and justice may be considered as opposite terms. Where one begins, the other necessarily ends. That action which justice requires cannot be of grace. An action, to be gracious, must be unmerited; and, if unmerited, it must be what no being is under obligation to perform. An act of grace is what may be performed, or not performed, without any injustice. The bestowment of a favor, which might have been withholden without any injustice, is an act of grace; but nothing short of this can be grace. The term justice is used in three different ways.

1. It is used in relation to the property of individuals.
2. It is used in relation to the moral character of individuals.
3. It is used in relation to the interest and well-being of society at large.

The first kind of justice, which has respect to exchanging property, consists in giving every man his own without respect to moral character. To be just in this sense of the word, debtors must satisfy the equitable demands of their creditors, and creditors, when these demands are satisfied, must give up their obligations. That grace which would be opposed to justice in this sense, would consist in giving money where it is not owed, or in giving up obligations without receiving their value. But, as the controversy between God and sinners is not concerning property, this kind of justice and grace is not at all concerned in the present inquiry.

It is the second kind of justice which relates to the treatment of moral beings, in regard to their character, to which this inquiry has respect. To treat moral beings exactly according to their real character, is an act of justice. To treat them more favorably than is correspondent with their character, would be an act of grace. To treat them more severely than is correspondent with their character, would be an act of injustice. Now, this kind of justice has not been satisfied, in the least degree, by the death of Christ. His sufferings have made no alteration, at least no favorable alteration, in the character of sinners. Their personal demerit is as great as it would have been if no atonement had been made. Indeed, in a multitude of instances, it is much greater. For if Christ had not come, they had not had so great sin; but now, they have both seen and hated, both him and his Father. Mankind are now by nature, subjects of the same evil heart of unbelief of which they were the subjects, before Christ appeared to make atonement for sin. It is still true that their throat is an open sepulchre, the poison of asps is under their lips, their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to do mischief [to shed blood], and the way of peace they have not known. It is still true, that their whole head is sick, and their whole heart faint. In point of personal merit, even now they deserve the damnation of hell. Should God now send them to that place of torment and confine them there for ever, he would treat them according to their personal character, and, consequently, do them no injustice. But if, instead of sending them to hell, he is pleased to pardon them and restore them to his favor, he treats them more favorably than is correspondent with their moral character, and, consequently, their salvation must be entirely of grace.

And, since it is evident that the moral character of sinners is not

made better by the atonement of Christ; and, of course, that this kind of justice, which consists in treating moral beings according to their character, is not in the least degree satisfied; it must follow, that there is as much grace exercised in pardoning sinners out of respect to the atonement, as there could possibly have been in case they had been pardoned without any atonement. Indeed, it was utterly impossible, in the nature of things, that this kind of justice could be satisfied. Nothing which Christ did, either in obedience or sufferings, could possibly alter the moral deserts of sinners. Nor was it, in the least, necessary that justice, in this sense of the term, should be satisfied. The moral desert of the sinner, considered in itself, presented no obstacle in the way of his salvation. If it had, it would have been an obstacle in the way of grace; and if it had been removed, grace would have been excluded.

It is the third kind of justice mentioned, which has been satisfied by the death of Christ. This, if it be proper to call it justice, is fully satisfied. For, by the sufferings and death of Christ to atone for sin, God has fully manifested a proper respect for his law, has made it evident that he loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, and has done what was needful to deter his other subjects from disobedience; so that he may now pardon sinners without doing any injustice to his kingdom in general. He may be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. But while the obstacles arising from the regard which God had to his own character, and the highest good of his kingdom, which, without atonement, opposed the salvation of sinners, are all happily removed by the propitiation of Christ; still, as has been shown, the moral character of sinners remains unaltered, their personal ill-desert the same. Hence, notwithstanding God may pardon them without injuring his kingdom, yet he is under no more obligation to do it as it respects them, than he would have been, if no atonement had ever been made; nor will he do them any more injustice in sending them to hell, than he would have done in doing the same thing, if Christ had never died. It is evident, therefore, that there is as much grace exercised in the pardon of sinners, as there would have been, if they had been pardoned without any atonement whatever.

What, then, must be the disappointment of those, who flatter themselves that all mankind must be saved, because Christ has made atonement for their sins. How inconsistent must it be, to talk of salvation by grace, and yet suppose, that God is under obligation to save all mankind on account of Christ's death! As well might it be argued, that God is under obligation to save fallen angels, for whom Christ never died.

CHAPTER VI.

ANSWER TO AN OBJECTION; IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN IN WHAT SENSE CHRIST DIED IN THE ROOM AND STEAD OF SINNERS; THAT HIS SUFFERINGS WERE NOT PUNITIVE, ETC.

OBJECTION.

THE Scriptures evidently teach that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners; and if he did thus die, they must be exempted. If A. enlist into the army, and B. offer to go in his room and is accepted, most certainly A. is exempted from service. So if Christ really tasted death for every man, and died in their room and stead, then must they be exempted.

ANSWER.

It is granted that if Christ died in the room and stead of sinners, in the same sense in which B. is supposed to go into service, in the room and stead of A., then all those for whom he died must be exempted from death. It is very plain, however, that in this case their deliverance would not be of grace. There can be no grace in A.'s exemption from service, when it has been procured by an acceptable substitute. Nor would there be any grace in releasing a captive, when a full ransom had been paid. Therefore, since it is evident that the pardon and salvation of sinners is of mere grace, it must be equally evident that those passages of Scripture which speak of Christ as dying in the room of sinners, and as giving his life a ransom for them, are not to be understood literally. They are to be regarded as metaphorical expressions, designed to communicate this general idea, that as B.'s consenting to perform the services which A. stood engaged to perform is the ground on which A. is released; and as the payment of money, or some other equivalent, is the ground of the release of a captive; so the death of Christ is the ground on which believing sinners are pardoned and saved.

Indeed, the metaphor may be carried still further. A. is released on the principle that B.'s services will answer the same valuable purposes which would be answered by the services of A. The captive, too, is released on the principle that the money, or other consideration paid as a ransom, will answer as valuable purposes as might be expected from retaining the captive in servitude. So the believing sinner is released from punishment on the principle that the sufferings of Christ answer the same valuable purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered in honoring and supporting the law, displaying the character of God, and securing the highest interest of his kingdom. These

important ends being as well answered by the death of Christ as they could have been by the execution of the penalty of the law, God has declared his righteousness for the remission of sins, and can be just to his law, to his kingdom, and to himself, and yet be the justifier of those who believe in Jesus.

When the righteous penalty of a law is executed upon a transgressor, it is said to take away his guilt, or to remove his desert of punishment. If this principle be correct, which it is presumed none will deny, it must follow that if it were possible for sinners to suffer the full penalty of the divine law and still live, this would effectually remove their ill desert. If the guilt and ill desert of sinners could have been removed in this way, and this should be considered a valuable object which might have been secured by executing the penalty of the law on them, it must be acknowledged that this is an object which the death of Christ does not effect. Nor was it possible that it should effect this; because guilt or ill desert is a personal thing which cannot be removed either by the sufferings of a substitute, or by any thing else, except the suffering of the full penalty by the guilty person. Neither was it necessary that the sufferings of Christ should take away ill desert, in order to their being a sufficient atonement. It is enough if they remove the obstacles which stood in the way of the pardon of sinners which have already been considered. If ill desert had been removed, it would have precluded the necessity and even the possibility of pardon. When the full penalty of the law has been executed on a criminal for any offence, there can be no such thing as pardoning him for that crime. As the law has nothing more to exact, there is nothing to be forgiven. So if ill desert could be removed in any other way when it should be removed, as no evil could be justly inflicted, there could be nothing to forgive.

If, then, Christ had removed or taken away the ill desert of sinners, there could be no grace manifested in their salvation. In this sense, therefore, the death of Christ cannot be considered as being in the room and stead of sinners. Hence, whether the Scriptures do teach that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners, must depend entirely on the meaning which is affixed to these terms. If we understand by them that the sufferings of Christ have answered all the purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered and occasioned, provided it had been possible for sinners to survive this execution, both in respect to supporting the divine government and removing the ill desert of sinners, it is evident the Scriptures teach no such doctrine. But if nothing more be intended by Christ's dying in our room and stead than that he suffered, that it might clearly appear that God would support and honor his law, that the divine character might be clearly exhibited and vindi-

cated, and the highest interest of the universe secured ; in short, that God might be just to his law, to his character, and to his kingdom, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus ; then it is, unquestionably, a doctrine plainly taught in Scripture.

If, however, this be all that is intended by this form of speech, in our room and in our stead, it may not be unsuitable to inquire whether other words and forms of expression might not be used, which would communicate the idea with much greater clearness. Notwithstanding the long practice even of the best writers has sanctioned the use of these terms, yet surely we should not, on that account, indulge such a fondness for them as to refuse to lay them aside, if continuing the use of them would endanger the salvation of one soul, who, through ignorance or willingness to be deluded, might infer from them that since Christ has died in our room and stead, we certainly cannot be liable to death. If, indeed, the terms were scriptural, these observations might with more appearance of justice be deemed sacrilegious ; though even in that case they would, like many other Scripture phrases, need explanation. But the truth is, that though they have been so long and so often used that many, probably, are scarcely aware of the fact, yet they really have no place in the Bible.

Those passages of Scripture, which have usually been relied on as proof that in a strict and literal sense Christ died in our room and stead, by no means prove the doctrine. We read, indeed, that "Christ died for the ungodly ;" that "Christ died for us ;" and that Christ hath once suffered, — the just for the unjust." But surely these expressions are far from proving that he died in our room and stead, in a strict and literal sense. An impartial reader would be quite as likely to understand them to mean, that he died for our benefit, or on our account, as that he died in our room and stead. Nor is there any thing in the original terms, *ἀντὶ* and *ὑπὲρ*, which restricts them to such a meaning. The word *ἀντὶ*, indeed, in some situations may mean *instead of* ; but in other situations, it certainly signifies nothing more than *for the sake of*, *for the benefit of*, &c. In Eph. 5 : 31, it merely signifies *for*. "*For* this cause ;" *ἀντὶ τούτου*. In Heb. 12 : 2, it signifies *for the sake of*. "Who, *for* the joy that was set before him ;" *ἀντὶ τῆς*, &c. In Matt. 17 : 27, it signifies *for the benefit of*. "That take, and give unto them, *for* me and thee ;" *ἀντὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ*, &c. The same may be shown of *ὑπὲρ*. It sometimes signifies *in the stead of*, and sometimes *for*, *on account of*, &c. Nothing can be determined, with certainty, merely from these prepositions, whether the phrase, died for the ungodly, should be understood instead of the ungodly, or for the benefit of the ungodly. We read concerning Christ that "he was made sin *for* us ;" by which we understand that he was made a sin offering. But it cannot reason-

ably be supposed, that he was made a sin offering instead of us ; that is, that we must have been made a sin offering, in the same sense in which he was, if he had not substituted himself for us.

Nor when we read that "he was sacrificed for us," are we to suppose that if he had not been made a sacrifice, we must have been sacrificed. "He died for our sins ;" but, most certainly, not instead of our sins. Such expressions as these are to be understood and explained, in agreement with the general tenor of Scripture on this subject. And being thus understood, they will afford no countenance to the notion that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners, in such a sense as to render them any less liable to punishment, merely on account of his death, than they would have been, if he had never died. If all mankind understood the doctrine of atonement by Jesus Christ, there would be less danger of conveying wrong ideas by using the terms, in our room and stead, than there is at present. Or, if these terms, as they are used, were universally understood in such a sense as to communicate the precise idea which the Scriptures inculcate concerning the substitution of Christ's sufferings for the execution of the penalty of the law, the use of them would certainly be unexceptionable. But that neither of these things is true, is evident from the melancholy fact, that many of the wicked are confidently expecting future blessedness, merely because they believe that Christ has paid their debt, by suffering the penalty of the law in their room and stead. This belief, in all probability, has been induced, in a multitude of instances, by an improper use of these unscriptural terms.

Another thing which has probably contributed in no small degree to confirm men in this delusion, is calling the sufferings of Christ punitive justice, the punishment due to sinners, and the penalty of the law. For when the sinner is led to believe that Christ has suffered punitive justice, the very punishment due to him for his sins, and that, too, in his room and stead, the inference is too plain to his darkened understanding, and too pleasing to his depraved heart, to be easily relinquished. When the premises have been laid for him by teachers of divine truth, and he has arrived at the pleasing conclusion by a little process of his own mind, or by the aid of those who directly strengthen "the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life," it is no matter of wonder, that he should be unwilling to be driven from this "refuge of lies." While such is the dangerous tendency of such forms of expression, it is not only certain that they have no place in the Bible, but that they are manifestly incorrect.

The Scriptures do not teach us that the sufferings of Christ were punitive, the punishment due to sinners, or the penalty of the divine law.

Nor is it necessary on any account that they should be so considered. It is sufficient that they answer the same valuable purposes, with respect to the law, the character, and the government of God, which inflicting the punishment due to sinners, or the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. That they do fully answer these purposes, is abundantly evident. Christ was set forth to be a propitiation,—to declare God's righteousness for the remission of sins,—that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. And if the sufferings of Christ were designed to answer the same valuable purposes, with respect to the law, character, and government of God, which the punishment due to sinners, or the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered, then it is evident that they are different things. That one thing answers the purpose of another, certainly implies that it is a different thing from that, the purpose of which it answers; for we never speak of a thing as answering the purpose of itself. Christ has often been called a substitute for sinners. If there be any correctness in calling him a substitute for sinners, it must be because his sufferings were, in some way, designed as a substitute for their punishment. But if his sufferings are in any sense a substitute for their punishment, it must be evident they cannot be themselves that very punishment; for a thing cannot be a substitute for itself.

If we keep in view the obstacles which stood in the way of the pardon of sinners without an atonement, and what Christ has done to remove those obstacles, it will be easy to perceive the precise object of his substitution. If a correct account has been given of the necessity of an atonement, and of what Christ has done to meet that necessity; and if the penalty of the divine law, and the execution of that penalty, may be considered as distinct things; it will follow that the sufferings of Christ were a substitute for the execution of the penalty, rather than for the penalty itself. For it has been shown that God could not be just to his law, his character, or his kingdom, without executing the penalty of his law on transgressors, unless something else could be done, which, as an atonement, would answer the same purposes as well; that is, as well as the execution of the penalty. For it is evident that if the law were transgressed, the penalty itself, without being executed, could answer no valuable purpose. Hence it must be the execution of the penalty, for which the sufferings of Christ were substituted.

The execution of a penalty, and the punishment or sufferings of the guilty, on whom the penalty is executed, may be viewed as distinct things. They are, indeed, inseparably connected; but this connection does not imply that they are not different things, but the contrary. The just punishment of a guilty person, when suffered, constitutes part of his

character.* It is on this ground that enduring a just punishment is supposed to remove ill desert. But the execution of the penalty affects only the character of him who enforces the law.

Hence it is evident the execution of the penalty of a law and the suffering of an offender, which is a consequence of such an execution, are distinct things, and exhibit different characters. One exhibits the character of him who enforces the law, and the other the character of him who suffers the penalty. Since these are different things, it must here be evident, also, that the sufferings of Christ must have been designed as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law, rather than for the punishment due to sinners. For it must be obvious, that the sufferings of Christ must have been designed to exhibit the character of God, honoring and supporting his law, showing his opposition to sin, and promoting the interest of his kingdom, rather than to make an exhibition of the character of sinners in endless misery, enduring the punishment due to them for sin, and thus removing their ill desert. It appears clearly that it was indispensably necessary that such an exhibition of the divine character should be made, in order that sinners might be consistently pardoned.

But if the ground on which an atonement was necessary has been correctly stated, it is equally manifest that there was no necessity for making a representation of the state of sinners in endless misery. Indeed, if such a representation could have been made, it would not have removed one of the obstacles which stood in the way of the salvation of sinners. Such a representation could have made no manifestation of God's opposition to sin, or his regard to the general good. If the object of the sufferings of Christ were merely to make a representation of what sinners deserve, which must be true if his sufferings were the punishment due to sinners, or merely a substitute for that punishment, it is inconceivable how God can, on account of those sufferings, "be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." For if the sufferings of Christ show that sinners deserve everlasting punishment, which, on this scheme, they were designed to show, this surely cannot be a sufficient reason why they should be saved from everlasting punishment, and raised to endless glory and felicity.

Should it be said that the sufferings of Christ, as a substitute for the

* It is to be remembered, that in personal character I include punishment endured, as well as actions performed. When a man has broken any law, and has afterwards suffered the penalty of that law, as he has by the transgression treated the law with contempt, so by suffering the penalty he has supported the authority of it; and the latter makes a part of his personal character, as he stands related to that law, as really as the former. — *Edwards's Three Sermons on Atonement.*

punishment of sinners, were designed to answer the same purposes which would have been answered by the sufferings of sinners, if they had been able to suffer, and actually had suffered the full punishment which their sins deserved, it may be replied that the only purpose which would have been answered by the sufferings of sinners, if they had been able to suffer, and had actually suffered the full punishment which their sins deserve, would have been to remove their ill desert and restore their characters. It is true, that if sinners had suffered the punishment due, according to the supposition, the divine law would have been supported, the character of God displayed, and the good of the universe secured ; but these important objects would not have been accomplished by the sufferings of sinners. It would have been the execution of the penalty which would have secured these. Suffering the punishment would, in part, have constituted the character of those who suffered ; while it would be the execution which supported the law and displayed the character of God. Hence, it is evident, that the sufferings of Christ are to be viewed as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law, and their efficacy as consisting in answering the same valuable purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. The sufferings of Christ, viewed in this light, constitute an ample atonement. "By atonement is here meant that which magnifies the broken law of God, and does it the same honor which would have been done by the execution of its penalty whenever it be incurred.*"

Some have supposed that the sufferings of Christ must have been the

* West on Atonement, p. 158. In p. 175, he says, "Unless punishments tend to deter from crimes — unless they exhibit a character in the righteous Governor of the world which excites a fear of offending on one hand, and a confidence in his protection and defence of the innocent on the other ; it must appear that they are useless, either as a manifestation of the glory of God, or a security of the peace and welfare of his kingdom. It is the visibility of the just displeasure of the holy God against offenders that renders punishments useful, and promotes the honor and security of the divine government. This righteous displeasure is expressed in words in the threatenings of the law of God ; and in its effects in the destruction which will be inflicted on final impenitents. If this displeasure against the deserving object, in every instance of transgression, be expressed and become visible, the law is honored, its end answered, and its authority supported — for, not the sufferings of the sinner do this, but the character, the just anger of God appearing in them. In whatever way this holy displeasure of God against the sinner becomes visible, the ends of government, for aught we can see, are answered."

If, according to the sentiment expressed in the foregoing quotation, it is "not the sufferings of the sinner," but the visibility of the character of God, as manifested in the infliction of those sufferings, that honors, answers the end, and supports the authority of the law, then it is plain, that the forementioned distinction between the sufferings of sinners, and the execution of the penalty is not only correct, but important.

very punishment due to sinners, because the apostle speaks of his death as a "curse." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." It is argued that this curse is the curse of the law, which must be the punishment due to sinners.

To this it may be answered, that it does not appear that the curse of the law in this passage means the punishment due to sinners. It may, as probably, mean the penalty of the law. This, and the actual suffering of transgressors who have incurred it, are different things. If the sufferings of Christ may be considered as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law, the apostle's meaning will not appear to be very obscure, though we should not consider Christ's being made a curse as expressive of his suffering the very punishment which sinners deserve. It should be remembered, that it is not uncommon to meet with passages in the sacred writings which were never designed to be understood in a sense strictly literal. This, too, is obviously the case with the passage now under consideration, even if we should allow that the curse which Christ was made was the very punishment due to sinners; for, surely, no one will suppose that the apostle meant to assert that Christ was made punishment. The word curse, when used in Scripture in relation to God's law, properly signifies the just sentence of the law, condemning to everlasting death. But no one would understand the apostle to mean, that Christ redeemed us from such a sentence, by being made such a sentence himself. This passage, therefore, must be understood as in some degree figurative; as are many other passages which relate to Christ. He is made to his people "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "By his stripes we are healed." "He is the end of the law for righteousness," &c.

It may not be improper to observe further, that there is something exceedingly unnatural, as well as unscriptural, in the idea that the sufferings of the Saviour were, in any strict sense, a punishment. For a punishment, strictly speaking, always implies guilt or ill-desert. At least those by whom it is inflicted, would have it understood that the sufferer is deserving of evil. Where there is no guilt, punishment cannot be properly inflicted. Nor were the sufferings which were inflicted on Christ the same as those to which sinners are doomed, as a just punishment for their sins. It is true, the infinite dignity of his person, and the greatness of the pain he endured, are sufficient to render his sufferings an infinite evil. Yet this infinite evil was not precisely the same which mankind must have endured, had the penalty of the law been inflicted on them.

Should it even be allowed that all the evil which Christ suffered was implied in the punishment to which sinners were liable, still, this

would not prove that his sufferings were that punishment. But even this may be doubted. It is plain, indeed, that his bodily pain might have been implied in the death with which sinners were threatened; but that his mental sufferings could be implied in that threatening is not equally evident. It is probable that his mental sufferings consisted principally in the effect which a view of God's anger against sinners would necessarily produce in his benevolent heart. "The reason why the mind is affected in the view of objects, is not, originally, their relation to a private, separate interest; but their relation to an interest, to which the affections are united, be it either public or private. Therefore, in proportion to the concern which the man Jesus Christ felt for the salvation of his people, would his mind be affected, in view of that dreadful wrath there was against them. This is not only conceivable, but is a supposition altogether natural. Therefore, that the divine anger, which was exhibited to the view of Christ, was not against him personally, but against the church, is a consideration which gives us no reason to suppose that it might not affect him with very deep distress. Christ had no degree of selfishness. His and his church's interest were one. Therefore, his good-will to the church would occasion the divine displeasure to be as sensibly felt, as if it had been against him; at least as far as he perceived it, and had a view of it communicated to him." *

If we suppose that, as our Lord approached his death, the Father made to him more clear and full manifestations of his anger against sinners, for whom his love was so strong, that he was about to lay down his life for them, this may account for that excessive sorrow and amazement which so overwhelmed him in the garden, and again on the cross. But this is a kind of distress which, it is presumed, no one will suppose constitutes any part of the punishment of the damned. In every view which can be taken of the subject, therefore, it appears manifestly incorrect to say, that the sufferings of Christ were the penalty of the law; or that he, in his death, suffered in the room and stead of sinners, the very punishment which they deserved.

It is said that the wife of Benevolus was guilty of a crime, by which, according to the law of the state, she exposed herself to a punishment which she could not endure and survive. Benevolus approved of the law, and believed that if it were disregarded, and the penalty not inflicted, the consequences to the state would be dreadful. Therefore, though he loved his wife tenderly, yet such was his regard for the good of the community, that he chose that she should be punished, rather than that the authority of the law should be destroyed, and that confusion introduced into the state which he believed would be the consequence.

* West on the Atonement.

But desiring that his wife might be spared, if it could be done in any way consistent with the public good, and supposing that his own constitution was sufficiently firm to enable him endure the evil with which she was threatened, and that his enduring it would support the authority of the law, as effectually as would the execution of its penalty on her, he offered to take the evil upon himself. His offer was accepted, and he actually suffered.

On the foregoing statement it may be proper to remark, that the atonement which Benevolus is supposed to make for his wife, was not satisfactory, merely on account of his suffering precisely the same evil with which his wife was threatened. If he had suffered any other evil sufficiently great, it would have answered the desired purpose just as well. On this principle, fines are sometimes substituted for corporal punishments. It makes no difference whether the evil consist in one thing or another, provided it is great enough to convince the subjects of the kingdom that transgression must be followed by evil consequences, proportioned to the guilt incurred. Any thing which is calculated to produce this conviction, as fully and as clearly as would the literal execution of the penalty of the law, must constitute a satisfactory atonement; because, in this case, the authority of the law is not weakened, nor is any encouragement given to transgression. The atonement which Zaleucus made for his son was equally satisfactory with that of Benevolus, although the evil to which he submitted was not the very evil with which his son was threatened.

It may also be observed, that the sufferings of Benevolus did not answer all the purposes which would have been answered by the punishment of his wife. If she had suffered the punishment which she deserved, this punishment would so far have constituted her character, as to have removed her ill desert, and secured her from further sufferings, on account of her offence, on principles of justice. In this case there could have been no grace in forbearing to inflict further punishment. But in the case which has been supposed, nothing of this appears. The sufferings of the husband constituted no part of her character, and removed no part of her ill desert. Nor was it necessary, nor even possible, that they should. If the same ends could be answered by his sufferings which would have been answered by the execution of the penalty of the law, this was sufficient. If she had herself endured the deserved punishment, two objects would have been accomplished. One would have been accomplished by the execution of the penalty; the other, by enduring deserved punishment. The object accomplished by the execution of the penalty of the law would have been, the support of the authority of the law and the government. The object accomplished by

enduring the deserved punishment would have been the removal of personal ill desert. One would have displayed the character of him who administered the government; the other would have gone to constitute the character of the person, from whom ill desert would have been removed, by suffering the deserved punishment. One would have been consistent with the free pardon of the criminal; the other, having done away ill desert, would have entitled to an exemption from further sufferings, on principles of justice.

On the whole, it is evident, that the sufferings of Benevolus were designed to support the authority of the law and government, rather than to remove the personal ill desert of his wife; that they were a substitute for the former, rather than the latter; and that the wife of Benevolus was as much indebted to grace for her release from punishment, as she could have been had she been released from punishment without the substitution of her husband's sufferings. So, if the atonement of Christ was necessary to answer the same purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered, namely, to exhibit the disposition of the divine mind; to show God's regard for his law, his determination to maintain its authority, his love of righteousness and hatred of sin; it must plainly follow, that the sufferings of Christ were designed as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law. If this view of the subject be correct, it must be exceedingly evident, that there was not that interchange of persons, with respect to rewards and punishments, between Christ and sinners, which some have supposed.

CHAPTER VII.

AN INQUIRY CONCERNING IMPUTATION.

It has been the opinion of many, that in order for guilty man to be justified through Christ, it is necessary that his righteousness should be imputed to them, so as to be a ground on which they may be considered righteous in law. For it is added, there must be a perfect righteousness somewhere, to lay a foundation for justification; and hence, since mankind have no perfect righteousness of their own, the righteousness of Christ must be imputed to them. What is really intended by these things it is not easy to ascertain. If the sentiment be, that Christ's righteousness is transferred to the believer so as to become his righteousness, it is believed to be utterly without foundation. Righteousness, as well as sin, must be entirely a personal thing, in such a sense that it cannot be transferred. The righteousness of Christ, like that of every other holy being,

consists entirely in his actions, feelings, and attributes. Essentially it consists in his love to God and other beings, and is as unalienably his, as is any attribute of his nature. Is it even possible that the actions which Christ performed while here on earth, in which his righteousness in part consists, should be so transferred from him to believers as to become actions which they have performed? Could the righteous words which he spake be transferred from him to saints, so as to become the righteous words which they have spoken? The bare mention of the idea must be sufficient to evince that in the very nature of the thing it must be impossible. Christ's exercises of holy love could no more be taken from him and transferred to believers, so as to become their exercises of holy love, than his miraculous acts of walking upon the water, or raising the dead, could be transferred in the same way; and both, for aught we can perceive, must be at least as remote from all possibility as the papal notion of transubstantiation.

If by Christ's righteousness being imputed to believers for their justification, be not meant that his righteousness is so transferred to them as to become their righteousness; but that God views and represents them as righteous, by virtue of the righteousness of Christ; then the inquiry which arises is, whether God do not view and represent things precisely as they are? Can he view things any otherwise than as they are in reality? If he can, what evidence have we that he does not view the bread and wine used in the sacramental supper as being the real body and blood of Christ? And if he ever represent any thing different from what it really is, what ground can there be for confidence in his representations? But if God do both view and represent things as they really are, he surely cannot view and represent sinners as being perfectly righteous; because this certainly is not their character. God does, indeed, view and represent Jesus Christ as being perfectly righteous; and the reason is, because he is perfectly righteous. But saints are not perfectly righteous. On the contrary, they have been totally sinful; and though now pardoned and justified, in point of strict justice, they still deserve eternal punishment, and God will for ever view and represent them in this light. The Scriptures nowhere teach either that God does now, or that he will in the day of judgment, view and represent believers as possessing in any sense a perfect righteousness. It is true, they lead us to believe that saints will finally be freed from all sin; but they equally lead us to believe that even then it will appear that they, as well as the finally impenitent, have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and in point of merit really deserve damnation. How else will every mouth be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God? But if God will cause all this to appear, how can he with any propriety be said to

view and represent saints as being perfectly innocent or righteous, on account of the righteousness of another? Besides, if God were to view and represent guilty beings as righteous, only because some other being is righteous, he would certainly view and represent things very differently from what they really are, to suppose which would be blasphemous.

But if by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to saints for their justification, is not intended either that his righteousness is transferred to them and becomes their righteousness, or that God views and represents them to be righteous on Christ's account, the inquiry must still remain, What does this language mean? Some have said that saints receive Christ's righteousness by faith, for their justification. But this assertion is really no more intelligible than the other. For it is difficult to see how saints can receive that righteousness of Christ which consisted in his own personal actions, affections, and properties.

We read in the Scriptures of different kinds of faith; as of a faith to remove mountains; a faith to be healed; faith which Paul preached; and faith in the blood of Christ. Now why cannot one of these kinds of faith receive the righteousness of Christ, as well as another? How can faith in the blood of Christ, any more than a faith to remove mountains, receive Christ's righteousness? Each of these kinds of faith, except that which Paul preached, is a mere exercise of the creature; and how can one exercise of a creature receive Christ's righteousness, any more than another? Faith in the blood of Christ, and repentance for sin, are both exercises of the same heart? The difference between these exercises consists merely in their object. Faith is an exercise of a good heart, in view of the sufferings of Christ as an atonement for sin. Repentance is an exercise of the same heart, in view of sin as being against an holy God. How, then, can faith receive the righteousness of Christ, any more than repentance? Can a believer's act of faith receive Christ's act of faith? Does the believer's exercise of faith receive Christ's exercise of love? Or is it the believer's love which receives that? How can the believer's faith receive Christ's love, any more than the believer's love can receive Christ's faith? Or how can the believer's faith receive Christ's love, any more than it can receive his walking on the sea?

It is confidently believed that neither Scripture nor reason affords any more warrant for the opinion that it is even possible for the believer's faith to receive Christ's faith, or love, than for the opinion that a believer's walking in the highway receives Christ's walking upon the water. If the meaning be, that saints, by faith, make the righteousness of Christ their own, the question still is, How can these things be? How is it possible that the righteousness of one being can become the righteousness of another being? When Christ said to his disciples, "Except your right-

eousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven," he certainly did not mean to teach that we must, somehow, obtain the righteousness of some other being.

Whatever the meaning of the language under consideration may be, if, indeed, it have any proper meaning, it must be liable, furthermore, to this capital objection, that, contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel, it supposes that the salvation of sinners is altogether upon the principles of law and justice. For if Christ has suffered the full penalty of the law, as a legal substitute for any part of mankind, then justice, in every sense, is satisfied; it has received its full demand; and, therefore, can require no further sufferings. Indeed, its demands must now be heard on the other hand; it must demand their exemption from all punishment, because the whole, which was ever due to them, has been inflicted on Christ, their legal substitute. It is very easy to see that, on this ground, no forgiveness or grace could be exercised in setting men free from punishment. This would only be treating them justly.

So if Christ, as a substitute for believers, has obeyed the law, so that God justifies them, and makes them happy, out of respect to the righteousness of Christ, considered as theirs, then saints are really justified by works in a law sense; not, indeed, by their own works, but by the works of their legal substitute. If saints are justified by the obedience of their substitute, it is the same thing as if they were justified by their own obedience, so far as it respects their being justified by works. It is evidently all on the principles of law and justice; and there is no grace in the matter. If a man engage to perform a certain work, for a reward which is proposed, it makes no difference whether he do the work himself, or procure another to do it for him. Let the work be done, according to agreement, and he is entitled to his reward. So if Christ has done for believers the work which the law required them to do, God is now bound, on the principles of strict justice, to bestow the promised reward, eternal life. There is no grace, but stern, unbending justice here.

Should it be said that saints are still unworthy, in themselves, and so do not deserve happiness, it may be answered, that they are not unworthy, in the sense in which they are viewed, as possessing Christ's perfect righteousness. So far from it, that in this sense they merit eternal happiness, by their substituted perfect righteousness. However guilty they may be, in themselves, still, in the sense in which they are considered as having a perfect righteousness, they must be made happy, according to strict justice. Besides, on this scheme, they have suffered, in their substitute, all they deserve to suffer; and, therefore, all their sin is, in a law sense, as though it had never been. And, since all their ill desert

has been done away, and they now have a perfect righteousness in their substitute, they can make a legal demand of happiness. In the day of judgment they may say, "Jesus Christ has been accepted as our substitute; he has suffered for us the full demand of the law; and we have a perfect righteousness in him; we, therefore, demand deliverance from the curse, and eternal happiness on the ground of law."

Should it be said that it was grace in Jesus Christ to take the place of the transgressor, it may be answered, that this removes no difficulty; for, still, after Christ has suffered and obeyed, as a legal substitute, there can be no grace in delivering believers from punishment, and making them happy. This act of God must be as strictly an act of justice, as though there had been no grace in Christ's taking the place of transgressors. Upon this scheme, that Christ has suffered and obeyed as a legal substitute for the elect, there can be seen no forgiveness, grace, nor mercy, in their deliverance from punishment, or in their admission to happiness. All still proceeds on the principle of law and justice, contrary to the decided testimony of the gospel, which certainly is, that the salvation of sinners, from beginning to end, is all of grace. Not of works, not of law; but, entirely, by another dispensation. The law has nothing to do in the affair, otherwise than by teaching men their guilty and miserable situation, and thus leading them to embrace the new and gracious method of salvation made known in the gospel.

And, besides being contrary to Scripture, this scheme is absurd in itself. For, in a law sense, one being cannot suffer or obey for another. The voice of the law is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" not another for him. Nor does the law require or admit of the obedience of one being in behalf of another; but it requires perfect obedience of every person for himself. "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him; and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*"

* The opinion that there must be a perfect righteousness somewhere to lay a foundation for justification, probably originated in a mistaken idea that the term justification, as used in the gospel, must have much the same meaning that it has in law books. But why are we not as much bound to understand the word pardon or forgiveness, as meaning what they do in law books, as we are to understand justification in this manner? If, however, we understand both pardon and justification according to their import in law books, we shall make the Scriptures involve the most manifest absurdity and contradiction. For the Scriptures evidently speak of the same persons as being both pardoned and justified. But in the sense in which the terms are used in law, if sinners are pardoned they cannot be justified; and, on the other hand, if they are justified they cannot be pardoned. It would be nonsense to speak of a man as being both pardoned and justified, in respect to the same charge, according to law. To avoid this difficulty no one surely will feel disposed to say, that sinners are justified on one ground and pardoned on another; that their salvation is partly through the law by justification, and partly through the gospel by forgiveness. The truth is, if,

If the meaning of the language under consideration be, that Christ's righteousness or active obedience procures heaven for believers; that, as his sufferings were necessary to open a consistent way for the pardon of their guilt, so his obedience was necessary in order to open a way in which they might be consistently admitted into heaven; it may be answered, that, on this ground, there would be as much propriety in saying that the sufferings of Christ are imputed to believers, as in saying that his righteousness is imputed to them. If the necessity of his righteousness, in order to procure their admission into heaven, renders it proper to say that his righteousness must be imputed to them, must not the same or a similar necessity of his sufferings, in order to procure their pardon, evidently render it equally proper to say, that his sufferings must be imputed to them? But, it is not true that Christ's righteousness has the same, or a similar influence, in opening a consistent way for our admission into heaven, which his sufferings have in opening a consistent way for our pardon.

If the view which has been given of the necessity of atonement, in order to the pardon of sinners be correct, it appears evident that they may be admitted to heaven, as well as pardoned on account of the sufferings of Christ. The atonement did not consist in removing the ill deserts of sinners; nor was it necessary (had it been possible), that their ill deserts should be removed, that they might be consistently pardoned. But if they might be consistently pardoned, notwithstanding their ill desert, unquestionably, after they are pardoned, they may be consistently admitted to heaven notwithstanding their want of personal merit. Had atonement been necessary to do away the ill deserts of sinners, and this had actually been effected by the sufferings of Christ, it is allowed that it would have been consistent to suppose that the active obedience of Christ was necessary to furnish them with positive merit. But in this

instead of going to law books to learn what justification means, we would be contented with the account given of it in the gospel, we should find no more necessity for a perfect righteousness somewhere to be a ground of justification, than we should to be a ground of forgiveness.

Every one must perceive that it would be folly to pretend that a perfect righteousness is necessary as a ground of forgiveness. Yet, according to the gospel, this would be no more unreasonable than the other. For, according to the Scriptures, the ground of our justification is nothing different from the ground of our forgiveness. Indeed, forgiveness and justification are used in the gospel as synonymous terms. Hence, we read of "being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" — who was set forth — to declare God's "righteousness for the remission of sins." Rom. 3: 24, 25. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts 13: 38, 39.

way there could have been no grace in the sinner's pardon, or in his being admitted into heaven. In this case, Christ would literally have paid his debt, and purchased his inheritance of glory.

Another consequence must be, that since Christ has tasted death for every man, every man's debt is paid, and every man's heaven is purchased. So that every man may demand both a discharge from evil, and an inheritance of glory. It is true, probably, that few would be willing to acknowledge these consequences which fairly result from such a scheme ; yet they seem to be unavoidable.

Besides, it may be pertinent to inquire, what reason can be assigned why such an interchange of persons between Christ and sinners, as some have supposed, was necessary. What were the obstacles which stood in the way to prevent infinite goodness from bestowing pardon and heaven on those who had none to endure the punishment due to them, or to furnish them with a perfect righteousness ? Abundant reasons have been given why atonement was necessary, in order that the guilty might be pardoned. But none of these reasons apply in the case before us.* None of these reasons rendered it in the least degree necessary, that their ill desert should be removed, or that their blessedness should be purchased. But what other reasons can be assigned which will apply ? It is confidently believed that no one can tell. Nor will it be less difficult to show the consistency of such an atonement with grace in the pardon of sinners. And, besides, either partial atonement or universal salvation must be the result of the scheme.

If, to avoid these consequences, it should be said, that, although atonement was not necessary to remove personal ill desert in order that sinners might be consistently pardoned, it does not hence follow that there is no necessity of an imputation of Christ's personal righteousness, in or-

* "It is unquestionably true, that Christ was set forth to be a propitiation to declare God's righteousness ; and the great ends of righteousness required that there should be an atonement for sin, in order to prepare the way for its remission. But it is to be remembered, it was the righteousness of God, as it related to the execution of threatened and deserved punishment, that needed to be declared, in order to the exercise of pardoning mercy ; and not as it related to the bestowment of rewards : — Righteousness, as it respected rendering vengeance to enemies, not favor and protection to friends. God's favor for the righteous, and his approbation of their characters, would not have been rendered suspicious by a total neglect to execute punitive justice ; — unless, indeed, his benevolent regards to their best interest, and his distinguishing approbation of their characters, should become suspicious by his neglect to avenge them on their adversaries. But the very supposition of a possibility that God's benevolent regards to the righteous should be rendered doubtful by his neglecting to punish the wicked, strongly implies that it was the righteousness of God, as it relates to the execution of punishment, that needed to be declared, in order to the pardon of the sinner." — *West on Atonement*, p. 30, 31.

der that the believer may be consistently admitted to heaven; it may be replied, that this is not the argument. If want of personal merit, or perfect righteousness is any barrier against a sinner's gracious admission to heaven, let the objector make it appear; and, when he has done this, let him have the goodness to show, that personal ill desert does not present a barrier against his pardon, which is equally insuperable. If a sinner, notwithstanding his personal demerit, may be graciously pardoned, it is believed it cannot be shown why a believer, notwithstanding his want of a perfect righteousness, may not be graciously admitted to heaven. "God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Much dependence is placed on certain passages of Scripture, which speak of Christ as being "our righteousness," for the support of the scheme in question. Christ is called "the Lord our righteousness." But how does it appear that, therefore, his righteousness is imputed to us? Why would it not be just as natural to infer, from his being called "our life," that his life is imputed to us? And, also, when we read that he is made of God unto us wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, that his wisdom must be imputed to us, &c.

One passage which is much relied on to prove that Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer, is, Phil. 3: 9. "And be found in him; not having on mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God, by faith." This passage is thus paraphrased by Dr. Doddridge: "I am happy enough if I may be found in him, vitally united to him by a true faith and love, and so taken under his protection and favor; not having on mine own righteousness, which [is] of the law; such righteousness as only consists in observing the precepts and expiations of the Jewish religion which I was once so solicitous to establish; nor any confidence in any legal righteousness whatever, as my plea before God; but that I may be interested in that which [is] by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith; that which he has appointed we should obtain and secure, by believing in his Son, &c. Rom. 3: 22, is also quoted, with much confidence: "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference;" which Dr. Doddridge paraphrases thus: Even the righteousness of God, which he hath appointed us to seek, by the exercise of a living faith in the power and grace of his Son Jesus Christ; to whom he commands us to commit our souls, with all humble and obedient regard.

This way of obtaining righteousness and life is now, I say, made mani-

fest to all, and like a pure, complete, and glorious robe, is put upon all them that believe; for there is, in this respect, no difference at all between one believer and another." All similar passages may be explained in a similar manner. While it is nowhere explicitly asserted that the righteousness of Christ must be, or ever is imputed to believers, or that his active obedience procures heaven for them, the Scriptures do plainly teach, that heaven is procured for them by his sufferings and death; or, in other words, that his sufferings and death procure heaven for them, in the same sense in which they procure their pardon. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:14, 15. This passage plainly teaches us, that the very object for which the Son of Man was lifted up [on the cross] was, that believers might have everlasting life. "For Christ, also, hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." 1 Pet. 3:18. The phrase "bring us to God," in this passage, it is presumed, all will agree, implies that divine intercourse to which saints, in heaven, are admitted.

But, surely, this passage cannot be fairly explained without admitting that the purpose for which Christ suffered was, that he might open a consistent way, by his sufferings, for believers to be admitted to this intercourse. Indeed, if the reasons which have been already stated, showing why an atonement was necessary to open a way for the pardon of sinners are correct, it must appear evident that no obstacles stood in the way of the admission of sinners to heaven, which did not stand in the way of their being pardoned; and, on the other hand, that whatever opposed their pardon, equally opposed their admission to heaven. It must follow that the same, and only the same atonement which was necessary to render their being pardoned consistent, was necessary to render their admission to heaven consistent.

Hence we may safely conclude, that if it became God to "set forth Christ to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood,—that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus;" it equally "became him,—in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. 2:10. Indeed the Scriptures explicitly authorize the belief that "for this cause he was the Mediator of the new testament, that, by means of death,—they which are called, might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance." Heb. 9:15. Hence we are taught to anticipate the very song which will be sung by all the redeemed of the Lord when they arrive at heaven, and surround the throne of the Lamb with the four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders, "Thou art worthy,—for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Rev. 5:9.

CHAPTER VIII.

REASONS WHY FAITH IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS NECESSARY, IN ORDER THAT SINNERS MAY BE JUSTIFIED.

THE Scriptures evidently teach, that faith in the blood of Christ is necessary in order that sinners may be justified through him. Christ is "set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." He suffered, that God "might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth." Notwithstanding the all-sufficient atonement he has made, "he that believeth not shall be damned." This, too, is perfectly consistent. For it is really as necessary that sinners should have faith in the blood of Christ, in order that God may be just in justifying them, as it was that Christ should suffer. Indeed, the same reasons which rendered the sufferings of Christ necessary, rendered it equally necessary that sinners should believe; because the same obstacles which stood in the way of the pardon of sinners without an atonement, still stand in the way of the pardon of those who have not faith. That this may be clearly perceived, however, it will be necessary to keep in mind the necessity and nature of the atonement.

If the atonement consisted in the literal payment of a debt, it is acknowledged the case would be different. If sinners had, literally, owed divine justice an infinite debt, and Christ had stepped into their place and paid it by his sufferings and death, it is very evident, that faith in his blood would not be necessary to their justification. If the debt of sinners has been paid, it cannot be again demanded whether they have faith or not. If one person owe another, and a third person pay the debt, and procure a discharge, it surely cannot be necessary that the person discharged should have knowledge of the transaction, in order to his being free from his creditor. Or, if he be informed that his debt is paid, it can make no difference, with respect to the demands of his creditor, whether he believe the information or not. His not believing, surely, cannot prevent its being discharged. Just so, if the atonement of Christ consisted literally in paying the debt of sinners, it can make no difference with respect to their discharge, whether they have any knowledge of, or belief in, what has been done or not. Whether they believe, or disbelieve, the debt must be discharged.

But the truth is, the atonement of Christ is not the literal payment of a debt. He has not satisfied the demands of the law in this sense. The law as much demands the punishment of sinners, and as loudly curses every one who continueth not in all things written in it, until he

obtains forgiveness, as it would have done if Christ had never died. All who have ever offended, even in one point, are as much guilty of transgressing the whole law, and actually owe as much to divine justice, until it is freely forgiven, as they would if Christ had not tasted death for them. Christ is not the end of the law in such a sense as to have annulled its claims. He did not come to destroy the law; but to fulfil. The law is not made void, through faith; but it is established. The great design of the atonement, was not to pay the debt of sinners; but to open a way in which they might consistently be forgiven. Instead of paying a debt, therefore, it consisted in making as full a manifestation of God's respect for his law, and determination to support it; of his abhorrence of sin, and his love of holiness; and of his determination to promote and secure the highest interest of his kingdom; as could have been made by a literal execution of the penalty of his law on transgressors; that so "he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

If this view which has been given of the atonement and of the grounds on which it was necessary be correct, it will be easy to perceive that there is now the same necessity that sinners should have faith in the blood of Christ, which there was that Christ should be set forth as a propitiation, in order that God may be just in justifying them. Faith in the blood of Christ may be defined as implying a cordial reception of the sufferings of Christ, or a cordial satisfaction in them, as a necessary, all-sufficient, and infinitely glorious atonement for sin. The necessity of such a faith may appear, from the same considerations which have been urged in showing the necessity of atonement.

1. God could not be just to his law, if he should pardon sinners who have no faith.

As there would have been great impropriety in God's pardoning sinners, without manifesting at the same time his regard for his law, so it must be evidently improper, that any should be justified, unless they respect the same law. Indeed, the same respect for his law which rendered it necessary that God should provide an infinite atonement, in order that he might pardon sinners consistently with his infinite perfections, must entirely prevent his justifying any who remain opposed to his law. For, should he justify any such persons, he would, in this very act, greatly dishonor his law; he would countenance sinners in dishonoring it; he would even justify them in their unreasonable opposition to its demands. Hence, if God does really respect his law, as we have seen, then it is plain he can never justify any in their opposition to this law. But all those who have not faith in the blood of Christ, are acting still in opposition to the law of God.

As has been observed, faith in the blood of Christ implies cordially receiving and approving of Christ's sufferings as a necessary atonement. But if sin is not an unreasonable and evil thing; if the law, of which sin is a transgression, is not good; then the sufferings of Christ could not be necessary as an atonement. The sufferings of Christ could not be necessary unless it were, in some way, to support the divine law. Faith in the blood of Christ, implying a cordial satisfaction with what Christ has suffered for the support of the divine law, as being indispensably necessary for the pardon of sinners, therefore implies respect for the law itself. While, on the other hand, unbelief, as it is a rejection of the atonement of Christ as being unnecessary and useless, dishonors the law which the atonement was designed to support.

Hence faith is evidently necessary in order to justification. For, if God should justify sinners who are destitute of faith, he would act directly against himself. While he testified that the atonement of Christ was necessary to the pardon of sinners, he would justify those who reject this testimony, and make him a liar. Indeed it is impossible that he should justify any on the ground of the atonement who have not faith; because both the atonement and faith are equally necessary, and for the same reasons. Notwithstanding the atonement, therefore, God cannot be just in justifying sinners, unless they believe in Jesus. He did not set Christ forth as a propitiation to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins in any other way, than through faith in his blood. It was not that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth not in Jesus; but "that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth."

2. God could not be just to his kingdom if he should justify sinners who have no faith in the blood of Christ.

Since the atonement was necessary that, if sinners were pardoned, the subjects of God's kingdom might yet be deterred from disobedience, and that the interests of holiness might be promoted, it must be evident that God cannot consistently justify sinners who have not faith; because this would have a tendency to promote unholiness. In this case, God would even justify sinners in their wickedness. Faith in the blood of Christ implies a cordial approbation of what he has done for the salvation of sinners. Any thing short of this must be rebellion against God. Sinners must either approve or disapprove of what Christ has done. If they disapprove of the atonement, they must disapprove of the divine law; and, consequently, of the character of the Lawgiver, which is there delineated. If they have faith, they acquiesce in Christ's work of atonement, and approve of the law and character of God; but if they have not faith, they remain in opposition to God, and to the whole economy

of grace. No sinner, therefore, can have any true holiness, unless he has faith in the blood of Christ.

Hence it follows, that if God should justify any sinner who has not faith, instead of promoting, he would destroy the interest of holiness. Instead of punishing sinners who despise and reject Christ, he would justify them. This could have no tendency to deter others from disobedience, but would encourage them in it. Moral beings, perceiving that God was not so opposed to sinners, who opposed and slighted Christ, and thus manifested their disrespect to the law which he died to honor, and their disapprobation of the character of God which he died to display, but that he would justify them, it is impossible that they should either believe him an enemy to transgression, or discover any consistency in his character. They would conclude that Christ was set forth to be a minister of sin; not to condemn sin in the flesh, but to justify those who continue in the practice of this evil and bitter thing. Hence it appears plain,

3. That God could not appear just to his own character, if he should justify sinners who have no faith.

Consistency is one thing which is essential to the perfection of any character. But, it is obvious, that should God justify sinners who are destitute of faith, he would act very inconsistently. He would appear at variance with himself, destroying at one time what he had done at another. By the requirements and threatenings of his law he manifested a regard for holiness and an abhorrence of sin. In giving his beloved Son to die on the cross to make an atonement, he manifested the same feelings, and displayed the same glorious character. But should he now justify those who have no faith in the atonement, no acquiescence in it, and no approbation for it, he would counteract and contradict what has thus been manifested in his law, and in the sufferings and death of Christ. In doing this, he would justify those who were opposed to Christ, which would be an implicit acknowledgment that their opposition was right; indeed, it would be taking part with them in their opposition. Hence his character would appear inconsistent and suspicious. Holy beings would be at a loss what opinion they might form respecting his real feelings. They might fear him; but they would lose their confidence, and would scarcely find it in their hearts to love him. Since, therefore, all who are destitute of faith in the blood of Christ are opposed to him, it is impossible that any such can ever be justified. Faith in the blood of Christ is, therefore, indispensably necessary to justification. Christ is not the end of the law for righteousness to unbelievers, or to them that have not faith; but he "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

It may not be impertinent to observe here, moreover, that if God should justify those who have no faith, it could answer no very valuable purpose, even to those who should be thus justified, as it could not avail to secure their happiness. Sinners cannot be made happy without being brought into a state of reconciliation with God, nor can they be reconciled unless they have faith in Christ. Reconciliation to God implies faith in Christ, and faith in Christ implies reconciliation to God. They so include each other, that where one is wanting the other cannot subsist. Every one who is truly reconciled must be pleased with what God does, so far as it is made known to him. For so far as any one is displeased with what God does, so far certainly he is unreconciled. Hence, if sinners are not pleased with what God has done, in causing an atonement to be made for sin, they are in a state of unreconciliation. They remain at variance, and at enmity with God. But if they are pleased with the atonement of Christ and so reconciled, they have faith in his blood. This is the very thing which is required in order to justification. Faith in the blood of Christ consists very much in being pleased and satisfied with what God has done, in giving his Son to die to make atonement for sin, and in cordially receiving the Son as an all-sufficient Saviour as he is offered in the gospel. But nothing short of this can be called reconciliation to God. Every thing short of this involves opposition and enmity.

Since, therefore, sinners must be reconciled to God, or they must be miserable; and since reconciliation to God implies faith in the blood of atonement, it is plain that faith in Christ is necessary to the happiness of sinners. Hence it appears that if God should justify sinners who have no faith, he would not only justify opposition to Christ and opposition to himself, but he would do that which would be altogether useless. For, though they were thus justified, sinners could have no peace in their opposition; they could not be happy. They would still be like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. But, certainly, the very idea of justifying one who is opposed to God, is highly repugnant to reason as well as to Scripture. There is, therefore, no possible way in which sinners can be justified, excepting through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood,—that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

CONCLUSION.

ON reviewing the foregoing pages, it appears that the opinion which some have entertained that the atonement of Christ was necessary, for the purpose of exhibiting evidence to the minds of intelligent beings that the divine law is just and reasonable, must be entirely erroneous. The truth is, no such evidence was wanting. Intelligent beings well understood that the law was holy, and just, and good. But if it had been otherwise, if such evidence had really been wanting, it would be impossible to find it either in the obedience or sufferings of Christ. If, previously to the atonement of Christ, there had been any ground of reasonable doubt concerning the justice of the divine law, the nature of the case would have required evidence of a different kind from any thing which results from the life or death of Christ to have removed it. The obedience of Christ could not have answered the purpose. For if the justice of a law be suspected, the justice of him who gave the law must be equally called in question; and, consequently, no conduct of his, founded on this suspicious law, can be considered as free from the same suspicion.*

If a king should make a bad law, doubtless the same motives which induced him to make it might also induce him to obey it. His obedience, therefore, could do nothing towards removing the grounds of suspicion. Neither could the sufferings of Christ have answered any such purpose. It has been shown, indeed, that the sufferings of Christ answer the same purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. But still they do not prove the law to be just; for this would not have been proved by the execution of the penalty. Should a king give an unjust law and govern his subjects by it, rigorously executing its penalty on every transgressor, it must be obvious, surely, that this could not prove the law to be just. Nor would the mere execution of the penalty of a good law afford any better evidence of its goodness.

But if the case were otherwise, and it could be shown that the obedience or the sufferings of Christ did actually prove that the divine law is just, still, how could this make the necessary atonement? The atonement was necessary, not that God might be just in condemning trans-

* "So long as we judge a rule itself to be bad, no conduct of any one formed upon it will make us believe it to be good. While we dispute the righteousness of the rule given, we dispute the righteousness of him who gave it. And in that case, his obeying it himself will no more convince us of its equity, than his administering government over us in conformity to it." — *West on Atonement*, p. 27.

gressors, but that he might be just in justifying and saving them, if they would believe in Jesus. But how could proving the law to be just answer this purpose? In other words, how could proving the law to be just afford any reason for remitting its penalty, and pardoning the transgressor? If it could do it in any way, must it not follow that the more clearly it appears that a law is just, the more easily may its penalty be dispensed with; and, on the other hand, that the more doubtful it is whether a law is just, the more indispensably necessary it must be that its penalty should be rigorously executed?

Equally erroneous is the opinion that the atonement was necessary to show that the divine law may be obeyed by man. What Christ has done and suffered does not prove this. It is true, Christ obeyed the law; but how this can possibly afford any evidence that man is capable of obeying it, does not appear. For Christ was not a mere man. In his glorious person the divine and human natures are united. Hence his obedience no more proves that a mere man is capable of yielding a perfect obedience, than his walking on the sea, raising the dead, and performing other wonderful works is evidence that any mere man can do the same things. But were it otherwise, and the obedience of Christ did prove that man has power to obey as perfectly as he obeyed, still it would be difficult to see how this would render it consistent that sinners should be pardoned. Are they less criminal because the law which they have disobeyed is one which they had full power to obey? If they had been incapable of obeying the divine law, would this have rendered it more necessary to punish their disobedience? If God had pardoned sinners on the ground that the law they had violated was shown to be just, and capable of being obeyed by man, how would this support the authority of that just and reasonable law? Would this have any tendency to deter others from disobedience? Would it manifest clearly God's love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity? Would any consistency of conduct appear in giving such a law, and then neglecting to execute its penalty? Would its being shown to be a good law be a sufficient reason why its penalty should not be executed? It is believed no one would choose to answer these questions in the affirmative.

It appears, also, that Christ's death was not a ground of redemption, merely as being a means of sanctification. It is evident, indeed, that Christ's sufferings and death, when viewed aright, must be a powerful means of promoting those dispositions of mind which are necessary to eternal life; and hence some have been led to suppose that the virtue and efficacy of Christ's death should not be viewed in any other light. Since none can be saved unless they are sanctified by his blood, or death, it has been concluded that the only reason why God forgives sins and

bestows other blessings on account of his death is, because this is a proper means of cleansing from sin. This scheme supposes that atonement was necessary for no other purpose than to furnish sinners with those personal qualifications without which they cannot receive pardon.

To explain the scheme it has been said that God "wants neither our information nor importunity to engage his kind regards; but he requires us to pray to him for his blessing and favors, in order to improve our minds in pious and virtuous dispositions. He wants not our assistance for the relief of the indigent and distressed; but he has made it our duty to succor them, for the exercise of our benevolence. He wants no sacrifice to excite or assist his mercy; but we may want it to increase and strengthen our virtue." And "as our prayers are a reason of God's conferring blessings upon us, because our prayers are means of producing pious dispositions in our minds; so the blood of Christ—makes atonement for sin, or is a reason of God's forgiving our sins, because the blood of Christ is a mean of cleansing us from sin." This scheme is unsatisfactory for several reasons.

1. According to this scheme the death of Christ is an atonement only so far as it is a mean of cleansing from sin; and its virtue consists only in being such a mean; from whence it would seem evidently to follow, that any thing else, which is a mean of sanctifying and cleansing from sin, must, at least, so far as it actually produces this effect, constitute as satisfactory an atonement as has been made by the death of Christ. Prayers, alms, and sufferings for Christ's sake, as well as the blood of Christ, are means of promoting pious dispositions in the mind, sanctifying the affections, and cleansing from sin. The institutions of the gospel are all means of sanctification. The preaching of the gospel is particularly designed as such a mean; the word of God generally is so designed; Christ prayed for the elect, "Father, sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth;" and the Holy Spirit is designated to the particular work of sanctification. If, then, the blood of Christ makes atonement, only because it is a mean of cleansing from sin, it must be difficult to see why all these other things do not answer the same purpose; yet neither of them is ever said to make atonement.

2. The scheme in question appears to suppose that the sanctification and cleansing of sinners was all that was necessary to render it consistent for God to grant them pardon and salvation. But certainly it must require some very explicit declaration of Scripture to authorize a belief that had this been all that was necessary, a God of infinite wisdom could not devise any means of sanctifying and cleansing them, which would have been less expensive than the sufferings and death of his beloved Son; or that if such means could be devised, a God of infinite benevolence would

not have chosen them. The Scriptures, however, give no intimation of any such thing.

3. However this scheme may be considered as combining the glory of God with the good of his creatures, it seems evidently to make the glory of God but a secondary object; but this appears to be inconsistent with the Scriptures, which plainly represent God as seeking his own glory supremely in all he does.

4. Although, in this scheme, the death of Christ is named as making atonement, yet it represents the atonement as consisting rather in a mere circumstance attending the death of Christ, namely, its tendency to promote sanctification. Indeed, it may be doubted whether even this circumstance would be the very thing; for the value of this must depend on the effect produced in cleansing from sin. So that, after all, the sanctification of the sinner would, in fact, be the atonement. This appears to be the precise reason why God exercises pardon. Hence it is not seen why a sinner, who might attain to as high a degree of sanctification in some other way, would not be as proper a subject of pardon, nor why God would not be as readily disposed to pardon him. But this would be yielding to those who have denied atonement all that they have contended for; as it would be granting that atonement was not necessary that God might be just in pardoning and saving sinners; and that he could not consistently with infinite benevolence, withhold pardon from any penitent. It would, however, be very inconsistent with the Scriptures, which declare that Christ was set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,—that God might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; and which plainly intimate, that without shedding of the Saviour's blood, there can be no remission.

Again; from the view which has been taken of the necessity and nature of the atonement, we may learn in what sense the sufferings of Christ may be considered as pleasing to God. It has been said, "Mere pain cannot be agreeable to a God of infinite goodness." From whence it has been inferred, that the sufferings of Christ were of no avail, any further than as they exhibited evidence of his disposition to obey. "The bare distress and pain of the Saviour, in themselves simply considered, had no virtue in them and were of no worth; but the disposition of mind with which he endured those extreme agonies and pains, the temper expressed under them were of infinite worth."

The correctness of this opinion may be reasonably doubted. It is admitted, however, that if by the sufferings of Christ, considered in themselves simply, be meant his sufferings abstracted from his obedience; and not only so, but abstracted also from all consequences to the universe as it respects supporting the divine law and government, and

displaying the divine character and glory ; in short, so abstracted from every thing in the universe, as to do no good in any sense, it must indeed follow that they are of no worth.

But it may be doubted, also, whether the disposition manifested by such sufferings in the same sense abstracted from every thing, would really be of any more worth. Indeed, if the sufferings of Christ be considered in any sense which would render them useless, it is not seen how a disposition to endure them can be of any worth. What wisdom or virtue can appear in a disposition to endure useless or worthless sufferings? If the sufferings of Christ were of no worth except as a medium through which Christ displayed the strength of his disposition to obey, it will follow that the atonement consists in the strength of his disposition to obey. It would hence follow, that whatever would answer to display the strength of Christ's disposition to obey as fully as his sufferings did, would answer the same purposes in respect to the atonement. If, then, it be true that "without shedding of blood there is no remission" of sins, it must follow that there was no possible way in which an infinite God could display the strength of Christ's disposition to obey, so fully as by his sufferings and death. A conclusion which necessarily results from this is, that since the display of Christ's disposition to obey was of infinite worth, his sufferings must be of equal worth, because they constituted the only possible medium through which this disposition could be displayed.

From what we have seen of the necessity and nature of atonement, it is evident that notwithstanding the disposition of Christ to obey was of infinite worth, it did not, however, constitute any part of the atonement. As has been shown, it did not answer any of those purposes for which atonement was necessary. To answer these purposes, the sufferings of Christ were indispensably necessary. If, then, there was any worth in the atonement, the same worth is found in the mere sufferings of Christ, because in these sufferings is the atonement found ; and if there were any thing pleasing to God in the atonement, then were the sufferings of Christ pleasing to him for the same reason.

It is an unquestionable truth, that God is, in some sense, pleased with whatever answers a valuable purpose. Things may answer valuable purposes, and be objects of choice on account of those purposes ; and in connection with those purposes may be viewed as pleasing, all things considered, though they are in their own nature displeasing, and would, if they did not answer those purposes, be highly disgusting. This is the case with the misery of the damned. Undoubtedly that would be highly displeasing to infinite benevolence, if it did not answer a valuable purpose. But as far as that misery is necessary to support the authority of

the divine law and the honor of the divine government, it is unquestionably, on the whole, pleasing to God; nor is it seen why the sufferings of Christ, if they be supposed to answer the same purposes, may not be, in the same sense, pleasing.

The sufferings of Christ were designed as a substitute, not for the punishment of sinners, but for the execution of the penalty of the law. They answer the same purposes which would have been answered by the execution of that penalty in case there had been no atonement. But, if it were pleasing to God to annex a penalty to his law, and if he be a consistent being, it is not seen why it may not be pleasing to have that penalty executed upon transgressors. But, if the execution of that penalty might be pleasing, why might not any thing else, which would answer the same valuable purposes, be equally pleasing?

The sufferings of Christ were designed to answer these purposes, and it has been shown that they do answer them fully. Hence, it is evident, they are agreeable to God. It is not supposable that they were agreeable in any other sense; nor is it supposable that Christ would have consented to suffer, or that the Father would have consented that he should suffer, if they had not been agreeable in this sense.

Hence we may conclude that he suffered nothing more than an infinitely wise God judged necessary, that these important purposes might be fully answered. He suffered nothing in vain. What he began in the manger, he finished on the cross. Nothing more can be intended, by his suffering under Pontius Pilate, than that he then finished the great work. He then completed that course of sufferings which was necessary to answer the great ends of his incarnation.

It may be observed further, that in God's requiring the sufferings of Christ in order to pardon believing sinners, there is nothing arbitrary. He did not require this without sufficient reasons. The honor of his law, the glory of his character, and the interests of his kingdom rendered it necessary. Some have supposed that the constitution of the gospel, which requires full atonement before sinners can be pardoned, represents the Supreme Being as deficient in goodness. But this, surely, must be a great mistake, unless he would have appeared possessed of more goodness if he had executed the penalty of his law on all transgressors, without having mercy on any of them. For, surely, no one can rationally suppose that God would have appeared as possessing more goodness, if he had suffered his holy law to fall into contempt, his subjects to transgress with impunity, and the affairs of his kingdom to go to confusion and ruin. Such a procedure, on the part of the divine Being, might, indeed, have rendered the state of incorrigible offenders less deplorable; but it would have been totally inconsistent with the blessedness of holy beings, or the general good of God's universal kingdom.

The doctrine of atonement, therefore, instead of lowering our ideas of God's goodness, greatly exalts them. Indeed this is the doctrine which, above all others, produces this effect. The sufferings of Christ declare God's goodness, as well as his righteousness. Herein "was manifested the love of God."

Some have supposed, that if Christ's sufferings constituted a full atonement for all those for whom he died, he must have endured as much pain as all those for whom he died would have endured, in case they had suffered the full punishment due to them for their sins; and that, if this is the case, there is nothing gained by the substitution, because the evils which the damned would suffer would no more than counterbalance the evils which Christ has suffered, leaving nothing gained in favor of the general good. To this it may be answered, that, even on this ground, much would still be gained. Though it is true that nothing would be gained by avoiding positive evil, yet much would be gained by obtaining positive happiness. For while the two evils exactly balanced the happiness secured by the everlasting redemption of a great multitude which no man can number, would greatly overbalance the sum of happiness which the man Christ Jesus lost during the short period of his sufferings, if this could be considered as loss, on the whole, to himself. But even this is not to be admitted. On the contrary, there was a gain of happiness even to Christ himself, in consequence of his sufferings. Hence we are assured that, "for the joy which was set before him," he "endured the cross, despising the shame." There would, therefore, even on this ground, evidently be a great gain of happiness in the universal system.

But besides, there is no reason to believe that the sufferings of Christ were of an amount, in point of quantity, equal to all which those for whom he died must have endured. It does not appear to have been necessary, considering the innocence and dignity of his character, that the real evil endured by Christ should be so great as the evil of the sufferings of those whom he redeemed must have been. It is quite sufficient if God's regard for his law, his opposition to sin, and his love for the general good, be as fully manifested in the sufferings of Christ, as they could have been by the execution of the penalty of the law.

The objection, which has sometimes been made, that the doctrine of atonement represents God as being inexorable, is also groundless. For certainly no one can rationally suppose that God is inexorable, merely because he will not pardon sinners in a way which is totally inconsistent with the honor of his government, the well being of his kingdom, and the glory of his own character. Instead of inexorability, or a deficiency of goodness, every display which God has made of himself in the great work of man's redemption, has been a display of infinite benevolence or love. Even his anger is to be viewed as the result of benevolence.

We read much in the Scriptures of the anger of God. "He is angry with the wicked every day;" and his "anger burns to the lowest hell." But from these and other similar passages, we are to understand no more than the eternal opposition of God's benevolence to every thing which opposes his glory, and the highest good of his kingdom. God never indulged any other anger towards any creature, however rebellious and wicked, than what necessarily results from his supreme regard to the glory of his own name, and the highest good of the universe. Nor does the death of Christ render God propitious to sinners in any other sense than this; as it supports the authority of his law and kingdom, it renders the pardon of sinners consistent with the highest good of his kingdom, and with his own glory.

It hence appears, moreover, that the atonement of Christ is, in a strict and proper sense, for all mankind. Christ tasted death for every man; for the non-elect as much as for the elect. Indeed, election has nothing to do with atonement, any more than it has with creation, resurrection from the dead, or the general judgment.

From the necessity and nature of the atonement it is evident that its extent is necessarily universal. It was necessary to remove obstacles which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners. These obstacles have been considered; and it has been shown that the death of Christ completely removes them. Nothing, therefore, now remains in the way of God's pardoning any sinner whatever of the human family, who will comply with the conditions of the gospel on which pardon is offered. Neither the compliance of sinners with these terms, nor their non-compliance can, in the least degree, affect the nature or the extent of the atonement. Though the operations of the Holy Spirit are necessary to produce in the hearts of sinners a compliance with these terms, and though these operations are indeed granted to some, while they are withheld from others; yet this is not owing to any thing particular in the nature of the atonement; but it is owing merely to the "purpose of God, according to the election of grace." The Scriptures are remarkably plain on the point now before us. Christ testified that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. And the apostle John, addressing his Christian brethren, said, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2.

But though the atonement is, strictly speaking, for all mankind, one as much as another, this does not imply any obligation on the part of God, either to Christ or to sinners, to save any of them. Notwithstanding the

atonement, God is at full liberty to save, or not save, just as the general good may require, and his unerring wisdom dictate. If the general good require that any of those for whom Christ died should be left to continue in impenitency, and to perish in their sins, God may thus leave them, in perfect consistency with the nature and design of the atonement.

Whether the general good requires the salvation of a great or a small number, is a question which cannot be decided merely from the nature of the atonement. For if God had designed the salvation of only a small number, the same atonement, for aught we are able to see, would have been necessary to render his conduct consistent in pardoning that few, which has now been made as a ground of offering pardon to the whole. Indeed, if instead of designing the salvation of any, God had only designed to make a free and gracious offer of pardon and salvation to all who would repent and believe, leaving them entirely to their own choice whether to repent and believe, or not, still the same atonement must have been made. For it is plain that God could not consistently offer pardon to sinners on any ground which would not fully justify him in actually granting it, in case they comply with the conditions on which it is offered. But whether they shall be made to comply with these conditions, by the sanctifying agency of the Holy Spirit, or whether they shall be left to follow the dictates of their own wicked heart, and finally perish in unbelief, or whether there shall be an election of grace among them, and some be called and sanctified, while others are left to their own choice, are questions to be decided on other grounds than atonement. Because the direct object of atonement might be fully accomplished in either case.

This object, as has been shown, was to make a manifestation of the divine character, to declare the righteousness of God. This manifestation God has made. He has shown his hatred of sin and love of holiness. He has shown his regard to his own glory and the best interest of his kingdom. He has, also, manifested a merciful and gracious disposition towards sinners; for he has offered them pardon and eternal life, on condition that they believe in Jesus. These things constitute the object of atonement, and these things will for ever appear, even though no sinner should ever believe, or be saved. It will for ever appear that all was done on the part of God which was necessary, in order that salvation might be freely offered. It will also appear that the free offer of salvation was actually made. God may for ever say, in view of these things, "What could I have done more in my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" And Christ may say to a world of ruined sinners, "Ye would not come unto me that ye might have life." The direct object of atonement, therefore, may be accomplished, though no sinners should be saved.

Notwithstanding all the atonement has done, there still remains an

obstacle in the way of salvation. The unbelief of sinners must be removed. They must believe in Jesus, or his atonement can never save them. This is an obstacle which the atonement of Christ does not remove. Neither is there any thing in the nature of atonement which requires that God should remove it. The truth is, mere atonement has nothing to do with its removal. God may remove it or not, as in his view the interest of his kingdom and his own glory may require. If the interest of his kingdom and his own glory require that this obstacle be universally removed, no doubt it will be done.

But we have no evidence that this is the case. We indeed have evidence that the glory of God and the interest of his kingdom require, that this should be done in some instances; because we see that it is done. We see that the unbelief of sinners is removed, and they become believers in Jesus. But there are multitudes of others concerning whom this does not appear. The Scriptures also assure us that some believe, and they assure us, too, that some do not believe. "All men have not faith." They describe mankind as constituting two classes, the righteous and the wicked, the believing and the unbelieving. Nor have we any evidence that these two classes will not continue to exist for ever.

The mere goodness of God certainly does not afford proof that they will not thus continue to exist. For if the existence of sinners, in unbelief and misery, were inconsistent with the goodness of God, they certainly could not thus exist at the present time. We know, however, that they do thus exist. But if their present existence in this state is not inconsistent with divine goodness, then we have no evidence that their future state may not also be sinful and miserable. No doubt God is as able to make all mankind holy and happy in this world as he will be in the world to come. But since he does not make them holy and happy now, notwithstanding his infinite goodness, we have no evidence that he will do it hereafter. Doubtless the reason why God does not make all his creatures holy and happy in the present world is, because his own glory and the general good require otherwise. But if the glory of God and the general good may require that some of God's creatures should be suffered to continue in unbelief and misery in this world, we have no evidence that his glory and the general good may not require that they should be suffered to continue in the same state, in the world to come and during eternity. It is certainly as conceivable that sin and misery should be subservient, or even necessary to the glory of God and the general good in the world to come, as that they are so in this world.

It has been shown that the atonement of Christ answers the same valuable purposes, at least in relation to all that believe that the complete execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. Nothing

more than this was necessary. Nothing less than this was sufficient. If, then, God should give faith to all mankind, he might, out of respect to the atonement, save them all, and at the same time promote his own glory and the good of the universe to the same extent which might have been done by the execution of the law.

But it does not hence follow that God will give faith to all ; nor, if he should, that this would promote his glory and the good of his kingdom in the highest degree. It might, indeed, promote these objects in as high a degree as they could have been promoted by the execution of the law ; but the execution of the law could not have promoted them in the highest degree. If it could, then certainly the law would have been executed. For surely no one can suppose that God would have given up Christ to the sufferings of death, if his glory and the interest of his kingdom might have been as well secured by the execution of the law. And yet all that was necessary in order that the sufferings of Christ should constitute a complete atonement was, that they should answer the same valuable purposes respecting the character and government of God, which the execution of the law would have answered.

From whence it must follow, that the execution of the law would not have promoted the glory of God and interest of his kingdom in the highest degree. The sufferings of Christ, however, in order to constitute complete atonement, needed only to answer the same purposes which the execution of the law would have answered. Nor have we any evidence that they do, in themselves, answer any other purpose. Neither the execution of the law, nor the atonement of Christ, therefore, in itself, is capable of promoting the highest glory of God, or the best interest of his kingdom. If one could, the other must, for the same reason.

It may be asked, then, why should infinite wisdom choose the method of atonement, rather than the execution of the law ? The answer is, the atonement, though it does not of itself promote any object which might not have been promoted by the execution of the law, yet it opens a way in which God can introduce other measures, and accomplish other purposes, which could not have been introduced and accomplished in case the law had been executed ; and these other measures and purposes promote his glory and the interest of his kingdom in the highest degree. If the penalty of the law had been executed upon all transgressors, God never could have displayed his justice and mercy to the degree in which they now appear. The atonement, however, opens the way in which God makes this display in the highest perfection.

It is by means of atonement that God has opportunity of displaying his justice in the highest degree. If the penalty of the law had been executed on all transgressors, it is true the justice of God would have

appeared in some degree. It would have appeared in as great a degree as that state of things would have required. But it would not have appeared to that degree which the present state of things, under the gospel, requires. For, in order that the glory of divine justice may fully appear, it is necessary that the evil nature of sin should fully appear. But this never could have appeared to the extent that it now does, if atonement had not been made. Indeed, by the atonement, sinners are brought into a new situation in relation to their God, in which their sins become vastly more aggravated than was possible before. If no atonement had been made, the guilt of sinners would have been incomparably less than it now is. Sin now appears to possess a degree of malignity which never could have appeared if Christ had not come into the world as a Saviour. Hence he declared, "If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin." We are not to understand by this declaration of our Saviour that he meant that mankind, strictly speaking, would have been free from sin if he had not come. We are rather to understand that the sins of those who reject him are much greater, in consequence of this rejection; indeed, that they are incomparably greater. If he had not come, the sins of mankind, in comparison with what they now are, would have been as nothing. Yet, in order that the justice of God in the punishment of sinners may appear in the highest degree, it is necessary that the evil nature of sin, in its full extent, should appear.

Antecedently to all consideration of atonement, mankind, as sinners, actually deserved endless punishment. If no Saviour had appeared, and no offer of pardon been made, God would have been just in the infliction of this punishment. No doubt holy angels, who beheld, would have glorified his justice. In this case, however, the depth of human depravity, and the extent of the malignity of sin, could not have appeared. It could not have been seen that sin was so exceedingly malignant, and mankind so exceedingly full of it, as to be ready to reject a Saviour and his salvation when freely offered. If any one, except the Supreme Being himself, had informed angels that mankind had become so exceedingly depraved that even if a Saviour should be provided and salvation should be freely offered, on the most reasonable condition, they would all make light of it, and ungratefully reject the offer, it is probable angels would have doubted whether such wickedness were possible. If mankind, antecedently to the revelation of God's purposes of mercy, had been so informed, probably they, too, would have rejected the idea, and with indignation. All this, however, is true, and must be seen, before the justice of God, in his opposition to sin, can fully appear. But this is what could never have been seen, if the penalty of the law, without

atonement, had been inflicted. Neither could it have been seen, if, when atonement was made, God had given faith to every sinner. Because, in that case, it never could have appeared that the wickedness of mankind was so great, that, if left to their own choice, they would forever reject a bleeding Saviour. Yet all this must appear, in order that the justice of God, in his opposition to this wickedness, may fully be seen. And if the nature of sin is really so bad that a sinner, left to himself, will continue his opposition to divine grace, during eternity, then this must be manifested, in order that the justice of God, in punishing such wickedness, may fully appear.

Divine grace, also, must forever appear great, in proportion to the greatness of the wickedness that is pardoned. If, then, God would display the full extent of the riches of his grace, to the view of intelligent beings, he must so order his providence respecting sinners, as to make a clear manifestation of the evil nature of sin, even though it should be at the expense of leaving some to their own perverse and wicked choice, to be forever living examples of what all sinners must have been, had not divine grace plucked them as brands from the burning.

Thus it is evident that the glory of God may require that the extent of his justice, and the riches of his grace, be forever manifested, by leaving some sinners to their own chosen way, in perpetual unbelief; that he may, as saith the apostle, "show his wrath and make his power known on vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Nor is it difficult to see how the universe of holy beings may be constantly benefited by such a display. Certainly, all holy beings must always be interested in every display of the justice and grace of God. Even when the smoke of the torment of the damned ascendeth up forever and ever, inspiration assures us that they cry "Alleluia." Especially will redeemed sinners feel a deep interest in these displays. Our Saviour has plainly taught us, that he to whom much is forgiven, will love much.

If, then, the happiness of saints in heaven will principally consist in loving God, for his rich grace in their salvation, they will certainly be much interested in every display which is made of the depth of wickedness from which they have been delivered, and the awful but just punishment from which they have been saved. But this is what they never could have clearly seen, if divine grace had brought every sinner to embrace the Saviour by faith, as soon as his atonement had been announced. We have no reason to doubt, therefore, that divine justice, notwithstanding full atonement, does actually require that unbelieving sinners should be finally punished, according to the full demerit of their sins.

By their unbelief, they not only make a much greater manifestation

of the evil nature of sin, but they also become much more guilty. Their sins are much more heinous. They really deserve a much greater punishment for rejecting the blood of Christ, than they ever could have deserved if atonement had not been made. If, then, the divine law should take its course on them now, since they have so much enhanced their guilt by neglecting a Saviour, surely its demands must be much more awful than they ever could have been, if no Saviour had bled. Had the original penalty been executed, and no salvation offered, their sin, and consequently their desert of punishment, would have been nothing in comparison with what they now are.

What, then, if the sufferings of Christ do answer all the valuable purposes which the execution of the law would have answered, provided no atonement had been made? Does this prove that the execution of the law can answer no valuable purpose now, when, in fact, the guilt of sinners is actually increased to an incomparable degree, by their sinning against the atonement? If a delinquent debtor, at a time when his debt amounted only to a hundred pence, was offered a free discharge of it, provided he would perform a certain condition, would this entitle him to a discharge afterwards, when instead of performing the required condition, he had increased his original debt to ten thousand talents? Vain is every hope of eternal life which is not founded in the blood of Christ, and authorized by a living faith!

For, as has been abundantly shown, the same obstacles which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners without an atonement, stand equally in the way of his pardoning those who do not receive Christ by faith, as their Redeemer and Saviour. God cannot be just and the justifier of any who do not believe in Jesus. If, then, the general good required that none should be pardoned without an atonement, it must still require, notwithstanding the atonement, that none be pardoned except they believe. Withholding pardon from unbelievers, therefore, is so far from being inconsistent with full atonement for all mankind, that it is required by it. Both are on the same ground equally necessary.

Benevolus, in the atonement made for his wife, is supposed to have been actuated by a regard for the public good; a desire to support the authority of the law, and the interest of the community. If, having suffered, he had communicated a knowledge of the fact to her, and she had wholly disapproved of the substitution, and clearly manifested her determination to continue in the practice of the same wickedness for which she had been condemned, could he consistently with his regard to the good of the community, the very motive from which he consented to suffer, even desire her pardon? If he should in this case insist on her being pardoned, would he not contradict all the evidence which he had

before given of being actuated by a regard to the laws and interests of the community?

If the son of Zaleucus had disapproved of his father's expiation, called it folly, and openly avowed his determination of persisting in his crime, it is evident the good king could not have pardoned him. The atonement he had made was indeed ample, but his son's wicked opposition and contempt presented a new obstacle in the way of his being pardoned. The father had made an exhibition of high respect for his law. If, therefore, the son had remained in open and manifest opposition to this law, the father could not have justified him, without justifying opposition to the very law which himself had suffered to support. If he should now justify his son in this opposition, he would completely counteract all the effect of the atonement which he had made. He would appear very inconsistent destroying, at one time, what he had done, at great expense at another. His subjects would have no evidence that he was determined to support the authority of his law. The immorality which it prohibited would not be prevented. The laws and authority of his government would fall into contempt, and his kingdom would be ruined.

Delusive, indeed, are all the expectations and hopes of the wicked, which are built merely on the universality of the atonement; or, on the ground that Christ has tasted death for every man; while the very nature of the atonement is such, that God cannot be just, and the justifier of any who do not believe in Jesus; while the very blood which was shed "for every man," reiterates the awful declaration of Christ, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

REMARKS ON THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

HAVING exhibited in the foregoing work a view of argument which, if correct, sets aside one of the principal arguments on which reliance has been had for the justification of the doctrine of universal salvation, I propose to add here a few observations on what I apprehend must be the principal remaining arguments in favor of that system.

I certainly shall not err by assuming that the above-mentioned sentiment ought never to be embraced without the most conclusive evidence of its truth. For, certainly, nothing short of the most enlightened assurance that the scheme cannot possibly prove false, can justify any one in risking the salvation of his immortal soul upon its correctness.

But where shall we find this clear evidence, this infallible proof on which a man may safely venture his eternal all?

I know of but two sources from which evidence can be derived, namely:—

The analogy of nature, and the doctrine of revelation. If the sentiment cannot be proved from one or the other of these, it may safely be affirmed that it is without support.

By the analogy of nature, I mean the correspondence of one thing with another in the natural world. The laws of nature are supposed to be steady and uniform in their operation. Events, which have uniformly occurred in time past, we believe will continue to occur uniformly in time to come. Our evidence in favor of the continued occurrence of these events, is from the analogy of nature. And this is the only principle (except immediate revelation from God), upon which we can ever calculate any future event with any degree of certainty or even probability. We believe that day and night, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, will continue to succeed each other. These events have succeeded each other so long and so uniformly, as to prove that they occur according to the uniform laws of nature. So long, therefore, as the laws of nature remain what they now are, these events will regularly

occur. Our belief in their future occurrence, therefore, is reasonable, because it is according to the analogy of nature.

Since the earth always has yielded productions necessary to supply the wants of man and beast, it is reasonable to believe it always will until it is destroyed. But the evidence on which this belief is founded, and which, indeed, renders it reasonable, is the analogy of nature.

But is there any thing in the analogy of nature which affords evidence that mankind will all be happy in the world to come? What are the facts in nature from which their future salvation can be certainly inferred? Are they all happy now? Have they always been perfectly happy? If so, the analogy of nature certainly does afford an argument in favor of their future happiness. But if not, if pain and misery always have prevailed among them, why is it unreasonable to conclude (judging from the analogy of nature merely), that pain and misery probably always will prevail among them? The fact that pain and misery prevail among God's creatures now, proves irresistibly that they are not incompatible with his government. Why, then, is it unreasonable to conclude that they always will prevail, at least in as great a degree, as they always have done?

Will you tell me, that although mankind suffer pain and misery in their present existence, yet there are certain principles of improvement in their condition which constantly tend to a better state; that the longer they live, the more knowledge they acquire and the more happy they become; and that in this way the operation of these principles will prepare them for complete and perfect happiness in the next period of their existence?

I answer: If this were a fact, and the evidence of it clear, if the supposed principles of improvement in the present condition of human existence have a manifest and constant operation as has been supposed; if the longer men live the happier they become, and this were the case with them universally; it certainly would be reasonable to conclude that they will probably be happier in the next period of their existence. From the analogy of nature, we should conclude that their miseries probably will come to an end. The same mode of reasoning from the past to future, which would lead to the conclusion that they will suffer pain and misery in the world to come, would also, from this supposed fact, justify the belief that probably this pain and misery will eventually become extinct. We should expect they would suffer pain and misery in the future world, because they always had, in a greater or less degree, suffered them in this world. But according to the supposed fact, their pain and misery in this world had constantly diminished; so that if they could have stayed long enough here, their suffering continuing to diminish in its accustomed ratio, would eventually have become extinct. I see not but this would be a fair argument.

But the argument fails, because the supposed fact, on which it is founded, does not exist. It is not true that mankind do grow happier, the longer they live. It is not true that their sufferings do universally and constantly diminish with the multiplication of their years. It is not true that extreme old age is the period of human life which approximates nearest to a state of perfection in happiness. No, this is not the period of earthly existence univer-

sally desired on account of its perfection of health, its freedom from perplexing care, and its exquisite relish for the pleasures of life. In these respects, the period of youth is evidently far preferable. The supposed fact, therefore, instead of being true, is actually the reverse of truth. The conclusion must therefore be reversed.

How often do we hear persons say, that their childhood and youth have been far the most happy periods of their life! But, if there is a just foundation in human experience for the remark, it certainly furnishes an argument from the analogy of nature, very unfavorable to future happiness. If mankind are afflicted with pain and misery during all that part of their existence with which we are acquainted; and not only so, but this infelicity actually increases, and their situation in relation to happiness becomes more and more unfavorable the longer they live; if their capacity for happiness actually decreases, as they approach a future state, until their present life is terminated in the agonies of death; certainly, no argument from analogy can be hence drawn in favor of their future happiness.

Moreover, in the present state of existence, it is an obvious fact that the happiness and misery of mankind very much result from their own character and conduct. This is strikingly the case with the miseries of poverty, disease, and disgrace, which so uniformly overtake the idle, the intemperate, and the dissipated. And, indeed, almost every case of human misery on earth may be traced to some impropriety of conduct in the sufferer. But if improper conduct subjects to suffering in this life, it is certainly reasonable to suppose it will subject to the same calamity in the life to come. If a man who possesses an unholy, revengeful, and malicious disposition cannot be happy in this life, what reason have we to suppose that he can be happy in the life to come? Since mankind manifest very different dispositions and characters, and are evidently happy or miserable, very much according to this difference in the present world, we have reason to expect that this will continue to be the case in the world to come.

But perhaps you will say, as many indeed have said, that all men become perfectly holy at the moment of death, and that this change prepares them for immediate and everlasting happiness. In answer, I would inquire what evidence you have for this opinion. Are you acquainted with any events in nature which are analogous to it? According to this opinion, thousands and millions who have lived all their days in sin, and actually become more and more hardened in iniquity, and perhaps closed their probationary life in some very daring act of wickedness, have been suddenly changed and prepared for heaven. This must have been the case with the inhabitants of the old world, who were destroyed by the deluge; with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain; with Pharaoh and his hosts; and even with the traitor Judas, the son of perdition. But have you ever known any events in nature which bear any analogy to this? With what sudden changes of this very favorable kind are you acquainted? *

* Multitudes of the wicked have been suddenly destroyed by the awful judgments of God in the midst of their wickedness. But if all men become perfectly holy, and go im-

But perhaps you believe that the unrighteous will suffer a temporary punishment in the world to come, and that this will be the means of their conversion, and will prepare them for everlasting happiness. But, I ask again, where is the proof of your opinion? With what events are you acquainted which furnish evidence that such salutary effects will result from punishment in the world to come? Do such effects result from it in the present world? Is it a fact, that such is the constitution of nature, that punishment uniformly tends to make the wicked better? Is it a fact, that the more a criminal is punished, the more effectually he is reformed? Is this the case generally with Sabbath breakers, who have been prosecuted and fined for violating the sanctity of the Lord's day? Is this the case, too, with thieves, who have been publicly scourged for their larcenies? And do counterfeiters, swindlers, and perjurers descend from the ignominious pillory and come forth from the gloomy dungeon, evidently purified by the fire of their chastisement? This evidently is not the case. But if punishments do not convert the wicked in the present world, what evidence have we that they will do it in the world to come? We certainly have none from the analogy of nature.

But if the case were otherwise, and it could be proved that future punishment will inevitably produce repentance, it would by no means follow that the damned will certainly be saved. If their punishment should humble and reform them, it would still be uncertain whether God would pardon and release them from suffering. In the present world we know he does not do it. Repentance and reformation do not prevent the evil consequences of past transgression. Health

mediately to heaven at the moment of their death, it must be a great mercy to be thus destroyed. For certainly it must be a much greater privilege to dwell in heaven, than to dwell in this world of sorrow. The wicked, then, who do not "live out half their days," are great gainers by their wickedness. Multitudes of them have been thus destroyed; and, according to this doctrine, sent directly to heaven. On this scheme, how highly favored were the inhabitants of the old world, who had corrupted their way to such a degree that divine vengeance would not suffer them to live? Every imagination of the thought of their heart was evil, only evil, and that continually. And it repented God that he had made man upon the earth; and he determined not to bear with them any longer. So he opened the windows of heaven and poured out upon the earth a flood of vengeance, and, in the most awful manner, destroyed all the inhabitants of the earth (except Noah and his family), and in his hot displeasure against them, took them all immediately into heaven. But Noah, because he was righteous and God loved him, was continued yet a long time in this world of sorrow, to encounter trials and dangers, and to suffer hardships and privations for some hundreds of years, before he could be admitted to that blissful world.

So, also, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were the blessed of the Lord. For they became so wicked that the Lord, in vengeance, consumed them with brimstone and fire, and in his hot displeasure took them all in a moment into his own bosom; while Lot, as a reward of righteousness and a token of divine approbation, must live and suffer yet a long time in this vale of affliction, before he could be allowed the privilege of joining his former neighbors and acquaintance, in singing the song of redeeming love!

And Judas the traitor, the son of perdition, had the happiness to arrive in that world, for which Paul ardently desired to depart this life, that he might go long before any of his fellow disciples.

I only ask, whether a scheme involving consequences like these can be considered reasonable?

ruined, reputation blasted, and interest squandered, by intemperance and voluptuousness, we certainly know cannot be restored by mere repentance and reformation.

But if God's treatment of us in the future state will be of the same nature which we find it to be in this, what evidence can we have that repentance will procure a release from punishment then, which it does not procure now? Since we know that repentance does not stop the evil consequences of sin in this world, how can we know that it will stay the arm of avenging justice in the world to come? Since there are evidently cases in which crime and misery are so connected that repentance ever so sincere and reformation ever so complete cannot separate them in this world, how do we know that this will not be the case with sinners in the world to come? Most certainly the analogy of nature affords no such assurance.

On the one hand, it affords no assurance that punishment will certainly lead to repentance; nor, on the other, that, if it did, repentance would certainly lead to salvation.

But you say you rely with confidence on the goodness of God. You cannot believe that the unbounded goodness of the Creator is consistent with the final misery of any of his creatures.

I answer; if the unbounded goodness of God is inconsistent with the final misery of any of his creatures, why is it not inconsistent also with their present misery?

It is a fact, too obvious to be denied, that the goodness of God is not such as excludes evil from existence. If it were true that the goodness of God possesses this quality, there would be nothing felt among all his creatures, except uninterrupted and perfect happiness. Now, if this were the case; if no evil did exist in the world; if all rational beings were virtuous and happy; evidence of the continuance of such a state of things would be highly probable. If we observed and experienced nothing but virtue and happiness in the world, we should naturally conclude that evil probably never would be felt upon the earth. I say probably, because even in this case we should not have positive proof. We should have no positive proof that evil did not exist somewhere; nor that it certainly would not be introduced among us. Merely not having evidence that evil would come, could not afford proof that it certainly would not come. It is possible that there may be some worlds in the universe where evil never has been known. Now the inhabitants of such worlds would have much better ground to infer from the goodness of God the universal happiness of rational beings, than we have. Yet such an inference would be infinitely erroneous. This our miseries loudly teach.

The fact is, the moment we allow the principle that a Being of perfect goodness cannot suffer the existence of evil among his creatures, the inference becomes irresistible that the great Deity, the Creator of the world, is not a Being of perfect goodness. Or, if we adopt the principle that evil is not inconsistent with the perfect goodness of God, then we cannot infer, from the mere goodness of God, that evil will ever cease to exist. If infinite wisdom and goodness chose that a system of finite beings, embracing both good and evil,

should exist, then we do not know that this kind of system will not continue to exist time without end. There is no principle of reason which evinces the contrary. For it is obvious that the continuance of evil cannot be any more contrary to the divine goodness than the present existence of it. The same argument, then, from the goodness of God to prove universal future happiness, will equally prove universal present happiness. The argument, therefore, is false because it contradicts fact. In reasoning from the goodness of God merely, we have as much evidence that all mankind are now, and always have been, perfectly happy, as we have that they ever will be. But we certainly know that God has not that kind of goodness which prompts him to make all mankind happy in this world; how then can we know that he has that kind of goodness which will prompt him to make them all happy in the world to come?

Our divine Creator has so constituted things that some men are virtuous and others wicked in this world; how then do we know that this will not be the case in a future world? He has constituted things so that some are happy and some are miserable in the present world; how then do we know that this will not be the case in the world to come?

The existence of evil in this world certainly proves one of two things;—either the divine Creator is not perfectly good, or the existence of evil is consistent with perfect goodness. If we allow the former inference to be correct, and suppose that the Deity possesses only a partial measure of goodness, we surely cannot know that he will make all men happy hereafter. For certainly the idea that God is only so far good as to make men partially happy in the present state is not enough to prove that he will make them all perfectly happy in a future state. But if we adopt the other inference, and allow that the existence of evil is compatible with perfect goodness in the Creator, we are then left without the least shadow of an argument that the goodness of God will ever exterminate sin and suffering. What is now consistent with the goodness of God, may be consistent with it millions of years hence, and even for ever. The mere perfect goodness of God, therefore, affords no evidence that evil will ever come to an end. It affords no proof that all men will be made permanently happy.

It is a fact, that such is the present constitution of things that some objects are pleasing to some men and displeasing to others; the same things which give happiness to some men, give disgust and misery to others. The plain and humbling doctrines of the gospel; the pure and spiritual worship of God; lively, ardent, and animated zeal in religion; these things give high joy and satisfaction to some, and occasion deep disgust to others. Now we have no evidence that this state of things will not continue for ever. The joys of heaven being purely religious joys, there is nothing unnatural or irrational in the idea that these things should give high joy and satisfaction to all those whose taste is prepared to relish them; and intolerable disgust and anguish to all those whose taste is opposed. So long as this is the present state of things, we have no evidence from reason that any essential alteration will take place in a future state. It is clear, therefore, that the analogy of nature or the light of reason affords no evidence, that all mankind will be happy in the world to come.

If, then, the light of reason affords no proof that all men will be happy in a future state, where shall we go for the requisite evidence? Shall we go to the Bible? Is it there to be found? Does the sacred volume clearly and decidedly teach that there is no such thing as evil in the world to come? That there is no danger of being hurt of the second death? Does it inform us so plainly that there is no danger of our being mistaken and deceived, that all sin and suffering will be hereafter completely destroyed and for ever unknown? Do the oracles of the living God explicitly inform us that mankind, whether they repent or not, whether they believe or not, whether they are holy or not, will all assuredly attain to perfect happiness, when death has transmitted them from time to eternity? If the inspired writers believed while they wrote, that mankind will all become finally happy, we should suppose they would have plainly expressed the sentiment. We should suppose they would have expressed themselves so plainly, that no persons would ever be in any doubt concerning their meaning. If all mankind will be finally made happy, then it is just as certain that the wicked will be happy in the world to come, as it is that the righteous will. And, if the inspired writers believed this, we should suppose they would have expressed their belief. And if they have expressed their belief that the wicked are as certain of final happiness as the righteous are, we should suppose they would have done it plainly. We should suppose they would have done it so plainly that no one would be in any danger of misunderstanding their meaning. We should suppose they would have been as plain and explicit, when they expressed their belief that the wicked will be finally saved, as they were when they expressed their belief that the righteous will be saved. Now it is a fact, that whenever the inspired writers speak of the future state of the righteous, they speak in a language which is so plain that no one can misunderstand their meaning. Indeed, the instance was never known of any person's entertaining any doubts whether the righteous in the world to come will be happy. Now, if the inspired writers believed that there is the same certainty that the wicked will be finally saved, why have they not expressed this belief in the same open, frank, and unequivocal manner? If they believed this doctrine and were honest, it is not seen why they have not done it. If they believed that the wicked will be finally happy, why should they be any more liable to speak of their future state, in a way calculated to lead people to believe that they never shall be happy, than they were to speak of the righteous in that way? It is a palpable fact, that the Scriptures never, in a single instance, speak of the righteous in a way which can lead any one to suppose that they shall never be happy. It is also a notorious fact, that the Scriptures do uniformly speak of the wicked in such a way as has generally led people to believe that they never shall see life. Indeed, it is uniformly the case through the Bible, that the language which is used in describing the future state of the wicked, is directly the reverse of that which is used in application to the righteous. Now, how is this reconcilable with common honesty on the part of the sacred writers, if they supposed that the wicked shall all be finally saved? On the ground that they believed such doctrine, there is a kind of double dishonesty running through the whole course of their writings. For it

is a truth that they never have, in a single instance, plainly and explicitly expressed this belief. They have never once said that a wicked man, dying in impenitence and unbelief shall surely find mercy, or be eventually pardoned, or be finally restored. And the reason of this neglect has not been because they have never spoken of the death of the wicked, for they have often spoken of it. Here, then, is one part of the dishonesty. The other is, whenever they speak of the death of the wicked, and the future state of the impenitent and unbelieving, they uniformly represent them as in a ruined and hopeless state. They assure us that "the hope of the wicked is as a spider's web," and "like the giving up of the ghost;" that "the hope of unjust men perisheth;" and that "when a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish." Now how can this language be reconciled with common honesty, if the writer of it at the time he wrote really believed that all the wicked shall in some future time be restored? One inspired writer assures us, that "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." But, how can this be reconciled with common honesty if the writer really believed that when the wicked are destroyed there shall be a remedy? The prophet Ezekiel denounced a woe against those who "strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way by promising him life." Now where was the honesty of the prophet when he denounced this woe, if at the same time he believed that a promise of life might be truly made to the wicked? Indeed, if there was a just ground on which life might be promised to the wicked, the woe would more justly apply to those who refuse or neglect to make them this promise. If the prophet had believed that the wicked should eventually see life, and had been honest, he would have said, Woe unto them who refuse or neglect to promise life to the wicked. But where do we find so much as a single passage in the whole Bible which is evidently of this import?

If the wicked shall in some future day be restored to the favor of God, Jesus Christ undoubtedly knew it. He, too, is a teacher to whom no one would wish to impute dishonesty. He was always frank, candid, and unequivocal in all his declarations. He was always willing to disclose the whole truth. He gave abundant testimony that the righteous shall be saved. He spake on this subject so plainly that no one can misunderstand him. But has he with equal plainness declared that the wicked shall be saved? or that they shall be finally restored? The passages in which he has declared that the righteous shall be saved are almost innumerable. Will any one pretend that he has made this declaration as often concerning the final state of the wicked? But why should he not do it as often if the doctrine is true? Surely we need as much evidence to convince us that the wicked shall be finally saved, as we do to prove that the righteous shall be saved.

But why should I inquire for so many declarations of Christ concerning the final salvation of the wicked, when it is a solemn fact that there is not one. No, in all our Lord's discourses, in which he seemed to speak of every thing, there is not a single declaration to be found which promises life to the wicked. But, on the other hand, his discourses abound with contrary declarations; "that

they shall be destroyed;" and that "where he goes they shall never come." And these awful denunciations are as numerous as his promises of life to the righteous. When we look for Christ's promises of life to the righteous, we find they are numerous. If we look to find, in his discourses, promises of life to the wicked equally numerous, we look in vain. If we look to find, in all his discourses, so much as a single promise of life to the wicked, we again look in vain.*

* It is said, if Christ did not teach the doctrine that all men will be saved, other inspired writers have plainly taught it. I answer, if they have, they have plainly contradicted themselves; for they have plainly taught a contrary doctrine. But if they have contradicted themselves, their testimony is good for nothing; and we are, after all, left entirely to the light of nature, which, we have already seen, affords no evidence that all will be saved.

But so far are the inspired writers from contradicting themselves on this subject, that it may be safely affirmed that no passage from their writings can be produced which may not be fairly explained, according to the analogy of sacred Scripture, without any implication of the above-mentioned sentiment. For a fair and candid explanation of all the passages on which Universalists have relied for support of their scheme, the reader is referred to *Edwards against Chauncy*.

There are certain passages of inspired truth which have no reference to mankind universally; but only to that part of them who are in Scripture denominated the righteous, believers, saints, the people of God, &c., which promise salvation to those to whom they refer. The Universalist, however, understands them as referring to all mankind; and infers from them that all will be saved. Matt. 1: 20, 21, is one of these passages. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, saying—Mary thy wife—shall bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Now unless all mankind are Christ's people, in the sense of this passage, it certainly affords no argument in favor of the salvation of all. If mankind are divided into two classes, the righteous and the wicked; if the righteous, in distinction from the wicked, are denominated the people of God; if Christ spake the truth, when he said, My sheep hear my voice; but ye (addressing the unbelieving Jews) are not my sheep, then passages of this description are not to the point.

There are certain other passages on which strong reliance has been had, on account of the supposed universal import of the word all. As proof that this word is often used in Scripture, with evidently a limited import, I adduce the following passages: Matt. 10: 22. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. Our Lord certainly could not mean that mankind universally would hate his disciples. He evidently meant no more than that those who were enemies of the gospel would hate them. In 2 Tim. 4: 16, Paul states that when he appeared before Cæsar all men forsook him. But certainly he could not mean to say that the whole human race forsook him. See, also, Mark 1: 20, 37. 11: 32. Acts 4: 21. 19: 19. Rom. 16: 19. 1 Cor. 9: 22. 10: 33. 2 Cor. 3: 2.

There is, also, a small class of texts which are merely expressive of the general benevolence of God, which have been much used by Universalists in support of their scheme. As a specimen of these I will mention two. 1 Tim. 2: 4; "Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." Ezek. 18: 32; "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God."

As I have already referred the reader to *Edwards against Chauncy* for a fair and candid explanation of all those sacred passages which Universalists have considered favorable to their sentiments, I will conclude this note with a quotation from that work, which will serve as an explanation of the two last-quoted passages, and also as a specimen of the clear and conclusive manner in which that author answers Universalian arguments. In reply to Dr. Chauncy's arguments from 1 Tim. 2: 4, he says: "It appears from various passages of Scripture that God is frequently said to will things which do not in fact come

But if we look for his denunciations of wrath against the wicked, and his unequivocal threatenings that they shall not see life, we find them in abundance. These we find quite as often, and quite as plain, as we do his promises of life to the righteous. Now, what is the evident and inevitable conclusion to be drawn from this fact? Supposing Christ to be an honest, candid, and faithful teacher of truth, what shall we conclude?

Let us look at a few of Christ's plain and candid representations of truth in relation to this subject, and see how they would be likely to appear to a candid and impartial hearer. We will begin with the parable of Lazarus the rich man.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen,

into existence, or with respect to which his will is not efficacious; as in the following passages: Matt. 23: 37; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Hos. 11: 8; "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." Deut. 5: 28, 29; "They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always!" Chap. 32: 28, 29; "For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Psal. 81: 13; "O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!" Isa. 48: 18; "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Luke 12: 47; "And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will," &c. Matt. 21: 31; "Whether of them twain did the will of his Father? They say to him, the first."

Now, what right had Dr. C. to suppose that the will of God, in 1 Tim. 2: 4, is not used in the same sense as in the passage just quoted? And if it be used in the same sense, there is no more absurdity in supposing that the will of God should be resisted in the one case, than in the other; no more absurdity in the supposition that God should will the salvation of all men, and yet all should not be saved; than that he should will to gather together the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and yet that they should not be thus gathered.

Beside the text quoted above, I may further refer to Ezek. 18: 32; "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God." Yet his death did, by the words of this text, take place in fact. So that here is a most plain instance of an event which takes place contrary, in some sense, to the pleasure or will of God.—Dr. C.'s reasoning is this: Whatever God wills, will come to pass. To apply this reasoning to the texts last quoted, it will stand thus: Whatever God wills, will come to pass. But God wills the continued life of him that dieth; therefore it comes to pass, that he who dieth does not die.

The truth is, God wills the salvation of all men, in the same sense that he wills the immediate repentance and sanctification of all men, or as he wills them to be as perfect in this life as their heavenly Father is perfect. He now commands all men everywhere to repent, to believe the gospel, and to comply with the necessary conditions of salvation; and complying with these conditions, they shall be saved immediately after the present state. So that God's willing that men should be saved, no more proves that all men will be saved, than his willing that all men should immediately repent; or than his willing that all men should be perfect in this world, and comply with his law as perfectly as the angels do in heaven, proves that these things will actually take place in this world."

—*Edwards against Chauncy*, p. 211, 212.

and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried: And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me; and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Now if Christ may be considered a plain, honest, and candid teacher of truth, what must we understand from this representation? Would a candid and impartial hearer obtain an idea from it that there is any ground of hope for the wicked in a future world? Would he not rather obtain the idea that when the wicked die they have then received all their good things, even to a drop of water, which they ever can receive? Would not an impartial hearer understand the language of Abraham to the rich man as fairly implying all this! The rich man petitioned for a single drop of water. Abraham told him he could not have it. And then assigned two reasons why he could not. One was, because in his lifetime he had received his good things. What an awful thought! that because he had received his good things he now could not any more receive any favor, no, not so much as a drop of water. And the other reason is equally awful and decisive. A great gulf was fixed between them, so that it was impossible for any one to pass. Now if we may suppose that Christ was honest and candid, and did not wish to make any wrong impressions on the minds of his hearers; nor to state things in a manner which would be liable to lead them into a belief of erroneous sentiments; what must we think of the representation in this parable? If our Lord had designed the parable for no other purpose than to give assurance that those who die in wickedness shall never be saved, or obtain any future favor, however small, I ask, how could he have represented this truth in a more forcible and plain and unequivocal manner?

The parable of the tares of the field is also equally explicit. "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man, which sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." That this important parable might be correctly understood, our Lord

has himself, in his usually plain and honest manner, explained it. His explanation is this: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." This explanation is so remarkably plain that all comment upon it is utterly needless.

In the parable of the supper also, Christ teaches in language most explicit, that all who slight the invitation, shall be for ever excluded. "Verily I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper."

In Christ's description of the day of judgment, he explicitly teaches the same truth. When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world. — Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. — And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Now who can suppose, if Christ was honest and unwilling to mislead the people, that he would make such plain and pointed declarations concerning the future state of the wicked; and make them too so often, and in fact make no other representation concerning their future condition; if at the same time, he believed that they all will be finally happy! The supposition is too absurd to be believed. Either Christ did not believe that the wicked who die in their sins will finally be saved; or, he did not honestly declare his sentiments. Indeed, the common manner of his preaching was such as actually made the impression on the minds of his hearers that the wicked will be finally destroyed, "and that without remedy." They who heard him, received the impression also that the number of those who will finally perish in their sins will be much greater than the number of the saved. His preaching, instead of leading them to think that he supposed all would be saved, was directly calculated to make them believe that he supposed but few would be saved. He preached, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" but "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." Preaching in this manner, it is not strange that people should believe he held that but few will be saved. Hence we read that one said unto him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Now, how unaccountable it must be if Christ preached that all will be saved, that any of his hearers should ask such a question! *Lord, are there few that be saved?* Who ever yet heard of any person's putting such a question to a *Universal preacher*? It was, however,

a very natural question to ask Christ. It was a question which the general tenor of his preaching was calculated to prompt. But let us see how he answered it. If he had preached in such a manner that his hearers had not clearly understood his meaning, here was a most favorable opportunity to make further explanation and correct their mistake. If he believed that all will be finally saved, here was a most favorable opportunity to make it known. It was, indeed, an opportunity which he as a teacher could not honestly avoid improving for the purpose. For, if he had hitherto kept his sentiments on this point concealed, he was here brought to a trial that must disclose them; or, he must absolutely refuse to answer an honest question; or, he must declare an untruth. For the very question is asked him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Does he say no; the number saved cannot properly be called few: They are many. Does he say, By far the greater part will be saved? Does he say, All will eventually be restored? No, nothing like this. But his answer is directly the reverse. His answer is, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate;" that gate which, in another place, he declared but few find. For, says he, "many will seek to enter in and not be able." The many will not be able. These are they that go in at the wide gate, leading to destruction. Now, who that believes Christ was honest and acquainted with his subject can suppose that he believed in universal salvation; or, in final restoration! Our Lord continues his answer still further. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

But, perhaps you wish to know whether Christ is not the Saviour of the whole world?

I answer, yes; and he knew perfectly well how many of the whole world would embrace the salvation he offered, so as to be actually saved by him, and has expressly assured us that the number of such is but few.

Do you ask, then, in what sense he can be called the Saviour of the whole world? I answer; in the same sense that a physician may be said to be the physician of a whole town when there is no other one, and this one is abundantly able to do all the business if the people would apply to him; while at the same time one half of the sick have no faith in him, and will not apply to him, and actually die for want of his help.

And now, reader, let me tell you that Jesus Christ is your Saviour; but, if you do not believe in him and make application to him for pardon, you must die in your sins, and perish for ever. On the authority of his own word I assure you, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

RECOMMENDATIONS.

From the Rev. Dr. Emmons.

FRANKLIN, August 27, 1817.

AFTER hearing the Rev. Caleb Burge read his manuscript on the atonement of Christ, I am ready to say that I think he has treated the doctrine with great ingenuity and propriety; and that his Essay is calculated to meet and refute the gross and dangerous errors which have long and extensively prevailed upon this very important subject. I hope his piece will be published and widely circulated.

NATHANAEL EMMONS.

From the Rev. Dr. Worcester.

SALEM, August 29, 1817.

HAVING so far attended to the Rev. Caleb Burge's manuscript on the doctrine of atonement as to get a view of his plan, his leading sentiments, arguments, and illustrations, and his manner of discussion, I feel no common degree of freedom and satisfaction in expressing an opinion in favor of its publication. The subject, at all times of the highest importance, demands at the present day most particular attention. Mr. Burge's discussion of it appears to be able, luminous, and interesting; and I devoutly hope that the publication will conduce extensively to the honor of God our Saviour, and to the advancement of his gracious and holy cause.

S. WORCESTER.

From the Rev. Dr. Spring.

NEWBURYPORT, August 30, 1817.

HAVING attended to the Essay of Mr. Burge on the atonement, I readily remark that I am peculiarly pleased with his luminous manner of treating the subject. As the salvation of man is the glorious expression of the divine perfections, the writer has permitted the inspired writers to explain themselves and each other upon the cardinal point. The atonement, therefore, as he presents it, is the harmony of the sacred writings; and is calculated to comfort Zion, and administer instruction to sinners.

SAMUEL SPRING.

From the Rev. Dr. Burton.

THETFORD, Sept. 12, 1820.

HAVING heard the Rev. Caleb Burge read the substance of what he has written on the atonement, I am ready to say that in showing why an atonement for sin was necessary, and in what it consists, he has elucidated the subject more fully and clearly than any author whom I have read; and in every part of it he has reflected to view much light; and I can cheerfully recommend it to the attention of the public, and hope he will consent to publish it for the benefit of the churches.

ASA BURTON.

A
DIALOGUE
ON
THE ATONEMENT.

BY
WILLIAM R. WEEKS, D.D.

(547)

DIALOGUE ON THE ATONEMENT.*

Paulinus. I understand that you think it improper to say that Christ died for all men ; is it so ?

Aspasio. I do think it improper. I think he died for the elect only.

P. Will you be so kind as to state the arguments on which you rely to prove that Christ died for the elect only ?

A. I will. My first argument is this : “The motive which induced the Father to send the Son, and which induced the Son to undertake to die, was special love to the elect. Those, therefore, who were not elected, were not properly the objects of the death of Christ.” How can you elude the force of this argument ?

P. I shall say, it takes for granted that which ought to be proved, namely, that it was special love to the elect which induced Christ to lay down his life. I avoid your conclusion by denying your premises.

A. If you say it was not special love to the elect which induced Christ to lay down his life, “you will contradict the whole word of God, which represents the death of Christ as the effect of the greatest love ever exhibited.”

P. I grant that the Scriptures represent the death of Christ as an ex-

* The following dialogue was published in the *Utica Christian Repository*, in the year 1823, with a preface as follows :—

MR. EDITOR,—It is known perhaps to many of your readers, that a manuscript lecture is in circulation, written by a Professor of Divinity at one of our Theological Seminaries, to prove that Christ died for the elect only. With a view to discuss the arguments contained in that lecture, I have thrown together some thoughts in the form of dialogue. Of the speakers, *Aspasio* represents the author of that lecture, and *Paulinus*, an advocate for a general atonement. Of the language put into the mouth of *Aspasio*, that which is taken from the lecture is marked with inverted commas ; of course the author of that lecture is not responsible for any thing that *Aspasio* says, which is not so marked.

X.

pression of the greatest love ever exhibited. But what then? Love for whom? That is the question.

A. Love for the elect undoubtedly.

P. Love for the elect, you say; but what saith the Scripture? "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16. I know that some who advocate your opinion put in the word elect before world in this text, and make it read "God so loved the elect world," &c., and then bring it forward to confirm your opinion; but I think you will not venture to make such an interpolation.

A. But what kind of love could God feel for the non-elect?

P. What kind of love could God feel for the elect before their regeneration, while they were yet enemies? I know of but two kinds of love which God can feel towards his creatures. One is, a love of esteem or complacency which he feels for those who are already holy, and cannot feel for any others; for he cannot look with complacency upon those who are totally unlike himself; he cannot esteem those who are totally destitute of any moral goodness; he cannot delight in those who do nothing but sin; he hates all the workers of iniquity. Before regeneration the elect are the same in their moral character as the non-elect. They are by nature children of wrath even as others.

A. I grant that God cannot feel this kind of love for the elect before regeneration, any more than for the non-elect. But what is the other kind of love of which you speak?

P. It is the love of benevolence or good-will. This has for its object all creatures capable of enjoyment or suffering, and regards the happiness of each one according to its real worth. Now the happiness of an individual is not, in itself, any more valuable if he is elected than if he is not elected. But God regards things according to their real worth. His regard for the happiness of the non-elect, therefore, is the same as for that of the elect. When this kind of love is exercised towards the guilty, it is called compassion. It is this which is expressed in the invitations of mercy which are addressed to sinners, in the commands to choose life, in the warnings, expostulations, and entreaties with which God calls upon the wicked to forsake their wickedness and turn to him. It is this compassion for sinners which is expressed in the oath of God. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." It was this compassion for sinners which led the Saviour to weep over Jerusalem, and to say, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her

wings, and ye would not!" Finally, it is this compassion for sinners, which is expressed by the Father, in giving his Son to die, and by the Son in laying down his life. And this is the plain import of the text before mentioned, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

A. But why should the non-elect be considered as the objects of this love? Had they not "forfeited all regard from their Creator?"

P. And had not the elect also forfeited all regard from their Creator? What was there in the elect before regeneration to entitle them to this regard from him, any more than the non-elect? I see no force in your question unless the reason why some are elected rather than others is, that they are not so guilty; a notion very acceptable to the human heart because well adapted to flatter its selfishness and pride.

A. But if God really felt such love for all men as to give his Son to die for them, why does he not save them all?

P. Because they reject offered mercy, and refuse to accept the Saviour that is provided; our Lord says, "ye will not come to me that ye might have life."

A. But if he loved them enough to give his Son to die for them, did he not also love them enough to change their hearts, and make them willing to accept the offered mercy?

P. If their happiness were the only thing he regarded, he would doubtless change their hearts, and make them all happy. Can you tell me why God chooses to save a part rather than the whole of mankind?

A. I suppose he loved a part more than he did the rest, and so gave his Son to die for them and not for the rest.

P. But why should he love the elect before regeneration more than the non-elect? No reason appears. They are no better by nature, nor is their happiness in itself any more valuable. That he does love them any more is a mere assumption of your own, and has no countenance from the word of God.

A. What reason, then, can you give, why he saves a part rather than the whole of mankind?

P. If their happiness was the only thing to be regarded, he would save them all. Why does not the humane and compassionate judge acquit the murderer and set him at liberty, instead of pronouncing upon him the sentence of the law? Is it because he has no compassion for him?

A. No; that cannot be the reason. He cannot be humane and compassionate if he does not feel strongly for the miserable culprit. I have never heard a good judge pronounce sentence of death upon a criminal without seeing him, at the same time, deeply moved and affected even to

tears. But while he feels strongly for the culprit, and is moved with the tenderest compassion for him, his regard for the public good predominates over his regard for the happiness of the criminal, and he gives him up to suffer the punishment he deserves.

P. You have given the true reason why God saves a part rather than the whole of mankind. He feels as strong and lively a compassion for the non-elect as for the elect. But while he is moved with the tenderest compassion for them, his regard for the public good predominates over his regard for their happiness, and he gives them up to suffer the punishment they deserve.

It is evident, therefore, that God felt no special love for the elect, no love of a different kind, or of a different degree, from that which he felt for the non-elect. He loved one as much as he did the other; and in the exercise of that love for all, he gave his Son to die for all.

What is your second argument, to prove that Christ died for the elect only?

A. My second argument is this: Christ in undertaking the office of mediator, had a certain number given to him of the Father, whose salvation he undertook to accomplish, by dying for them and preparing them for heaven. Now, "if only a part of the human family were given to Christ, in the eternal counsels of peace, how can it be supposed that he should, for no important purpose, die for others?"

P. If I rightly understand your argument, it is this: The great object of Christ in laying down his life, was the salvation of those for whom he died. But as he did not intend to save any but the elect, he could not have died for any others. Do I understand you?

A. You do. "Christ has died on the cross. The question is, for whom did he die? Certainly if we can ascertain his own design in this awful transaction, we have an answer to the question. But the death of Christ is a means of salvation. Properly, then, he may be said to have died for all whom he designed to bring to salvation, and for none else."

P. I grant freely that only a part of mankind were given to the Son in the covenant of Redemption, and that the salvation of these was one important object he had in view in laying down his life. But I see not how it follows that this was his only object, or even his principal object.

A. But if you hold that "he died for those whom he had no intention to save, it is incumbent on" you "to point out for what end. No wise agent performs an important work without having an important end in view." Tell me, then, if you can, "What was the end of Christ in dying for those whom he had no intention of saving?"

P. The great end of God in all that he has done is to promote his own glory. For this he has created angels and men, and for this he has

formed, and will carry into effect, the whole plan of his administration. This is an end worthy of himself. To make any thing less than this his ultimate end would be infinitely unworthy of him. Do you admit this?

A. Certainly. I believe that "For his own glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

P. The great end of God, then, being his own glory, whatever he has done is to be considered as intended to promote this. Whatever comes to pass was foreordained by infinite wisdom and goodness, in order to promote this great end. Did God determine to create angels? It was to promote his own glory. Did he determine that some of them should persevere in holiness, and be forever happy? It was to promote his own glory. Did he determine that some of them should fall into sin, and be forever miserable? It was to promote his own glory. Did he determine to make man? It was to promote his own glory. Did he determine that man should fall into sin, and come under the condemnation of his law? It was to promote his own glory. Did he determine to save a part of mankind from sin and misery through a Redeemer? It was to promote his own glory. Did he determine that a part of mankind should be left to perish in their sins? It was to promote his own glory.

A. But because God makes his own glory his chief end, does it follow that he has no regard to the good of creatures?

P. By no means. He regards the happiness of every creature according to its real worth. But the happiness of all creatures taken together is not worth so much as the glory of God. For what comparison can there be between finite and infinite? To represent God as disregarding the happiness of any of his creatures, would be to represent him as a cruel, unfeeling, and odious tyrant. But to represent him as regarding the good of creatures more than his own glory, would be to represent him as valuing a less good more than a greater good, which would be inconsistent with infinite goodness. While, therefore, he makes his own glory his primary object, he makes the good of creatures a secondary object. If you ask, then, what was the motive which induced the Father to give his Son to die for the elect? I answer, regard for his own glory was his chief inducement, and regard for their happiness was a secondary inducement. Each of these had influence with him in proportion to its intrinsic importance.

A. Very well. But what was the motive which induced the Father to give his Son to die for the non-elect?

P. The same answer may be given. Regard for his own glory was his chief inducement, and regard for their happiness was a secondary inducement.

A. How is the glory of God promoted by his giving his Son to die for the non-elect?

P. His mercy is glorified in the offer of forgiveness, which is made to them for Christ's sake; his truth and sincerity are glorified in his inviting them to turn and live; his patience and long-suffering are glorified in his bearing so long with all their ingratitude, and contempt of offered mercy; and finally, his justice is glorified in their aggravated condemnation for having rejected the Saviour that was provided for them.

A. But why could not his mercy be glorified in the offer of forgiveness to them, if Christ had not died for them?

P. Could mercy have been glorified in the pardon of sinners, if no atonement had been made?

A. By no means. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." If sinners had been forgiven without an atonement, it would not have been a manifestation of the glorious attribute of mercy, but of a weak and inglorious partiality for the wicked.

P. If, then, where no atonement is made, no forgiveness can be granted, it follows that where no atonement is made, no forgiveness can be offered; at least, there is no manifestation of mercy in such an offer. For if the offer should be accepted, the forgiveness could not be granted. What will the non-elect think in the great day, if they find that forgiveness was offered them on the part of God, with the greatest appearance of compassion for them, and at the same time discover that if they had accepted the offer forgiveness would have been refused? Will their mouths be stopped? Will they not rather be opened wide? Will they not consider it, and justly too, as so far from being a manifestation of mercy, that it was altogether insincere, and no better than mocking their misery?

A. But you suppose a case that never can happen. "If you suppose a non-elect man may believe, you should suppose, at the same time, that both the decree of election and of redemption correspond with this event; and then all difficulty will be removed."

P. The non-elect are either able or unable to accept the offer. If they are able, then the case can happen; and the appearance of mercy, expressed in the offer, should be judged of accordingly. If they are unable, then the difficulty is greatly increased; for they are not only tantalized with the offer of forgiveness which cannot be granted, but they are mocked with proposals which they cannot comply with. It is like calling upon a drowning man to take hold of a rope and save himself, when there is not only no rope within his reach, but he has no hands to take hold of one if there were.

But if Christ has died for all men, they can all be forgiven if they will

repent and believe. And so the offer of forgiveness can be consistently made to them on the part of God, and be a real expression of his mercy. And since they are all moral agents, and able to accept the offer, their salvation is, by this means, put entirely at their own option. Should an earthly government offer pardon to a criminal, upon the easy condition of his own voluntary acceptance, and should it appear that every obstacle was removed, so that he might be pardoned if he would, there would be no doubt of the merciful disposition of that government. Even the criminal himself would say, with his dying breath, "The government was merciful, but I would not receive pardon at their hands."

A. What have you to say respecting the truth and sincerity of God?

P. If Christ has died for all, then the truth and sincerity of God are glorified in his inviting all to turn and live. If Christ has died for all, then he has made ample provision for the salvation of all, provided they will comply with the prescribed conditions. When a man makes a feast and invites twenty persons to come and partake of it, what does the invitation say to all and each of them, come, for there is provision made to entertain you? or, come, for there is no provision made for you? Certainly, the invitation amounts to a declaration that there is provision made for every one who is invited; and it is so understood by those who are invited. And if it were not so understood, it would not be considered a sincere invitation, but a gross insult. If the master of the feast should say, I invite twenty when there is only provision made for five; you are all invited to come, but if you come only five can be received, and the rest must go empty away. What would be thought of such a man? But the invitations of the gospel are not attended with any such declaration. They say, "Come, for all things are ready." No minister of the gospel is sent to say to the non-elect, Come, for there is no provision made for you; come, for if you do you will be shut out.

A. But the ministers of the gospel do not know who the elect are, and therefore they cannot do otherwise than invite all indiscriminately. When they address a company of sinners, they do not know but that they are all elected; and therefore, they can sincerely invite them all.

P. But the ministers of the gospel are only servants, sent in their master's name to proclaim his invitation. The invitation is his, not theirs. And he knows for how many he has made provision. The question is, how he can sincerely invite all to come. The invitation to any one certainly holds out the idea that there is provision made for him. He so understands it; and it is intended that he should so understand it. He must so understand it not to feel himself insulted by the invitation. If he understands that he is invited while at the same time there is no provision made for him, he will feel it as a gross imposition. Or, if he

should not discover it till long afterwards ; if he should at the time suppose the invitation to be sincere, but should afterwards discover that no provision was made for him, and that if he had come he would have been excluded, he cannot look back upon the transaction and consider it in any other light.

A. But the invitations of the gospel are not in fact made to all the human race. A great part of the world have never heard the gospel.

P. The ministers of the gospel are commanded to preach it to every creature. That they have not done so is a fault of theirs, for which they will have to answer to their master in the great day. The invitations of the gospel are, therefore, in fact, directed to every creature. But, *Aspasio*, do you think that all are elected who hear the gospel preached?

A. No. I have no reason to think that.

P. Then the fact that the gospel has not been actually preached to every creature will avail you nothing. It looks like a mere subterfuge, intending to evade coming to the point and meeting the difficulty fairly.

A. But I think the invitation may be given to all men as sincerely, upon my plan, as upon yours.

P. How can that be?

A. I will tell you. Suppose a thousand captives are confined in prison — suppose a person wishes to redeem one hundred of them, and, for that purpose, pays to the authority which holds them in prison a pearl of great value, “sufficient to redeem all the captives in prison ; but the person paying it has in view only to redeem his own friends ; this intention in the redeemer, and the acceptance of the price by the authority which holds them in bondage, constitutes the pearl a ransom, and confines it to the number for whom it was designed. But the pearl itself is sufficient to ransom all the rest of the captives if it had been applied to their advantage. To carry on the allusion, suppose that the person undertaking to redeem his friends should say, ‘I will have proclamation made in the prison that every one who will acknowledge me as his deliverer, and will submit himself to my authority, may immediately come forth on the footing of the ransom which I have paid ; for none but my friends will accept these terms, the remainder will prefer their prison to liberty, which can only be had by submission to me, whom they inveterately hate.’ Now the person commissioned to carry these tidings to the prison would feel himself authorized to proclaim deliverance to every one who was willing to accept the terms, and to use arguments and motives to induce them to submit ; but the event would be, that none would accept the offer but the real friends of the redeemer. This he knew from the beginning, and therefore he paid the ransom for no others. Is there any thing insincere in this whole transaction?”

P. Was the pearl paid for the whole, or only for a part?

A. It was paid only for the hundred who were intended to be redeemed. There was nothing paid for the rest.

P. Then its value makes no difference. If the whole price was paid for the hundred, there was nothing paid for the nine hundred. They are in just the same situation as to the possibility of their deliverance, as if no ransom had been paid for any. The great value of the pearl seems to me only a blind, to prevent the true state of the case from being seen. What if some of the nine hundred had accepted the offer, and attempted to come out, would they not have been stopped at the door by the keepers of the prison? Would they not have been told there is no ransom paid for you; you cannot be released?

A. You ought not to ask such a question; for it was foreseen that none of them would accept the offer.

P. But there is a wide difference between their being hindered only by their own voluntary refusal of the offer, and their being hindered also by the want of a ransom being paid for them. In the one case they could come out if they would; in the other they could not come out if they would. In the one case their liberation is possible, and depends on their own voluntary choice; in the other their liberation is impossible, for if they should choose to come out, and make the attempt, they would find the doors locked and barred against them. If the ransom had been paid for the whole, and their liberation had been rendered possible, and had been made to depend entirely upon their own voluntary choice, then they could all be sincerely invited to come out; but if the ransom was paid only for the hundred and nothing was paid for the rest, their liberation was impossible; it did not depend upon their own voluntary choice; they could not come out if they would; and therefore to make the offer to them and call upon them to come out, is just as if one should go to the doors of a prison, and looking through the grates should call upon the prisoners to rise and come out, when they were fast bound in chains and the doors are locked and barred against them, which would be but mocking their misery.

A. I think the patience and forbearance of God towards the non-elect appears as great upon my plan as upon yours.

P. How so?

A. Because "those who are not elected are nevertheless under the government of God, and bound by his laws; if, therefore, they live where the gospel is preached they cannot but be required to believe in Christ, for it is a reasonable duty. It is required by the moral obligation which they are under; for the law of God certainly binds all men to the performance of every holy act." When, therefore, they refuse to obey his

laws, and provoke him by their transgressions, his patience and forbearance are manifested in not cutting them off at once, and sending them to the regions of despair as they deserve.

P. I grant that the non-elect are under the government of God, and bound by his laws; and that they are required to love God with all their hearts, and to express that love by all those holy acts which are suited to their condition and circumstances. So are the devils. They are under the government of God too, and bound by his laws; and they are required to love God with all their hearts, and to express that love by all those holy acts which are suited to their condition and circumstances. But will you say that the devils are bound to receive Christ as their Saviour?

A. No. "Devils are confined in chains of darkness. They have no offers of mercy. They receive no benefits, and their salvation is, in the nature of things, impossible; for though Christ's merit is of infinite value in relation to the object he had in view, yet we have no right to assert that obedience to a human law, and suffering the penalty of that law, would be a sufficient atonement for beings of an infinitely different species, of whose sin we have no particular information."

P. But the devils "are, nevertheless, under the government of God, and bound by his laws;" and "the law of God certainly binds all to the performance of every holy act." Why should they not "be required to believe in Christ, for it is a reasonable duty?"

A. I have given the reason already. It is not a reasonable duty for them, because their condition and circumstances are different.

P. Very well. And for the same reason, upon your plan, the non-elect are not bound to believe in Christ. He did not die for them. There is no atonement for them. "Their salvation is, in the nature of things, impossible; for though Christ's merit is of infinite value in relation to the object he had in view," it was not his object to die for the non-elect. His death is of no value in relation to them. If they appear to have any offers of mercy, it is only in appearance, and not in reality. It is only because the elect are so mingled with them that the ministers of the gospel cannot distinguish, and so are compelled to make an indiscriminate offer; it is not because there is any mercy for them which they can have, for where no atonement is made, no mercy can be exercised. If they receive any benefit now, it is only for the elect's sake, and because they are so mingled with them that they cannot but partake of common favors, as the barren rock shares in the rain from heaven which falls on the fruitful field. It is not because they enjoy any of those privileges of a state of probation, which constitutes a fair opportunity for securing their salvation. They have no such opportunity. There is no

atonement for them. It is a reasonable duty for all those for whom Christ died to believe in him, to receive him as their Saviour ; but it is not a reasonable duty for devils, because Christ did not die for them ; and, for the same reason, it cannot be the duty of the non-elect upon your plan. They cannot have Christ for their Saviour, for he did not die for them.

A. How, then, do the patience and forbearance of God appear greater upon your plan than upon mine ?

P. The patience and forbearance of God in sparing the guilty is great in proportion to the number and magnitude of their offences. The non-elect are guilty of all those offences against God, upon my plan, which they are upon yours and others besides, great and numerous and aggravated.

A. What are they ?

P. On my plan the non-elect are guilty of rejecting a Saviour that is provided for them ; of hating and persecuting and crucifying the Son of God who loved them, and wept over them, and poured out his life's blood for their souls. They are guilty of despising the mercy of the Father, who calls upon them in the most affecting terms and expostulates with them, and warns them and intreats them to repent and be saved, declaring, with all the solemnity of an oath, " As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." They are guilty of resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit, who strives with them and reproves them, and calls upon them to embrace the Saviour who died for them. They are guilty of wasting their period of probation, and sinning away their day of grace ; of refusing to secure the salvation of their souls when it is put in their own power, and of wantonly and wickedly throwing themselves away when eternal life is brought within their reach. With these sins they are not chargeable upon your plan, for no salvation is provided, no Saviour has died for them, no mercy can be had, no opportunity for securing eternal life is afforded. Since, therefore, the non-elect on my plan are guilty of these great and aggravated sins, with which on your plan they cannot be chargeable, the patience and forbearance of God in sparing them from day to day is, on my plan, far more gloriously displayed than they can be upon yours.

A. You will at least acknowledge that the justice of God is glorified in the condemnation of the non-elect, even though no Saviour died for them ?

P. Yes ; but in a degree far less.

A. How so ?

P. The non-elect, as well as others, are bound to love God with all their hearts, and to keep his commandments perfectly ; and for refusing

to do this they are justly condemned. For this they would be justly condemned, though no Saviour had been provided. So far the justice of God would be glorified in their condemnation, whether Christ died for them or not. But if Christ has not died for them, the justice of God cannot be glorified in condemning them for rejecting a Saviour. There is no Saviour for them that they can reject. The justice of God cannot be glorified in condemning them for refusing to secure the salvation of their souls. There is no salvation brought within their reach which they can refuse. The justice of God cannot be glorified in condemning them for despising his offered mercy. There is no mercy for them which they can despise. If, therefore, on your plan the wicked are inexcusable for not loving and serving God, on mine they are doubly inexcusable. If on your plan they are justly condemned for refusing to love and serve God, on mine they are justly condemned for the same thing; and besides this, they are justly condemned for rejecting a Saviour that was provided for them, for throwing away their souls when their salvation was put within their power, and for despising the mercy which they might have enjoyed.

A. You also mentioned God's regard for the happiness of the non-elect, as a secondary inducement with him to give his Son to die for them. How does it show any regard for their happiness, when, according to your own representation, their condemnation becomes only more aggravated in consequence?

P. It must be remembered that it becomes so through their own fault. They neglect to improve the privileges put into their hands. They might be saved if they would, but they will not.

A. But this was known to God from the beginning, and therefore it seems to me that a regard for their happiness would have dictated that no such privileges should be given them which they might abuse. How can it be any privilege for a man to be put into a situation to increase his guilt, and consequently his misery?

P. Do you believe, then, that the non-elect enjoy no privileges or blessings in this life?

A. I would not say that. I admit that they "are placed here in a condition of comfort, or at least, in a mixed state, where many blessings and privileges are enjoyed; and this occurs in consequence of the mediation of Christ." And in this their situation differs from that of the devils. "Devils are confined in chains of darkness. They receive no benefits."

P. How can the common blessings of life which they enjoy be considered any blessings to them, since they abuse them also to increase their guilt and aggravate their final condemnation? And how is it any kind-

ness to bestow such blessings upon them, when it was known from the beginning that they would so abuse them?

A. That which is in its own nature a good, and capable of being improved by us to our advantage, is a blessing, and must be so considered whether we improve it or not.

P. Then you have answered your own question. That which is in its own nature a good, and capable of being improved by us to our advantage, is a blessing; and it is a privilege to have it bestowed upon us, and a kindness in the bestower, whether we improve it to our advantage or not. By Christ's dying for the non-elect, they are placed in a situation very different from that in which they would have been if he had not died for them. If he had not died for them they would have been in a situation at least substantially the same as that of the devils. They could have had no privileges. No blessings could have been bestowed upon them. They could receive no benefits. For where there is no atonement, no mercy can be shown. But since Christ has died for all, all "are placed in a condition of comfort, or at least in a mixed state, where many blessings and privileges are enjoyed." But besides this, those who live where the gospel is preached, non-elect as well as others, are placed in a situation in which they enjoy the means of grace, and have an opportunity to secure the salvation of their souls. A Saviour is provided, an atonement is offered them, pardon and peace are proclaimed in their ears, the Father invites, the Saviour entreats, the Holy Spirit strives. Eternal life is brought within their reach, and urged upon them. The welfare of their immortal souls is put into their own hands, and they may secure it if they will. Are these no privileges? Are they not in themselves a great good, and capable of being improved by them to their own unspeakable advantage? In this way, therefore, God shows his regard for their happiness; and manifests the strongest solicitude for their welfare. And if they perish after all this, they will be without excuse, and their blood will be upon their own heads.

Thus then, Aspasio, I have pointed out "for what end" God gave his Son to die for those "whom he had no intention of saving." It was to glorify himself, and to manifest his regard for their happiness. It was to put them into a state in which they might be saved if they would, and to make it depend entirely upon their own choice whether they were saved or not; that thus, in throwing away their souls, they might be rendered doubly inexcusable, and their blood might be upon their own heads. Till, therefore, you can show that these things are of no importance, you ought not to conclude that Christ died for the elect only, because he could have "no important purpose" in dying for others. What is your third argument to prove that Christ died for the elect only?

A. My third argument is this:—"The death of Christ was a real atonement, a ransom price, an expiation, and a propitiation for sin; a full satisfaction to law and justice; and must therefore be efficacious in behalf of those for whom he died. If he died for all, then all must be saved. Consequently, if only a part of the human race shall certainly be saved, Christ died only for that part."

P. This argument depends entirely upon the nature of the atonement. From your views of its nature, you conclude that it was made for the elect only. My views of its nature are probably different from yours. From my views of the nature of the atonement, I conclude that it was made for all men. Will you state your views of its nature?

A. I will. "The word atonement, though often used in the Old Testament, is not found in the New Testament except in one instance, Rom. 5; 11, where it ought to have been reconciliation. In the view, however, of our translators, there was but little difference between these two words, for he whose sins are atoned is reconciled. Of such an atonement as leaves the person for whom it was made forever under the guilt of his sins, they had no idea." "The Hebrew word for atonement signifies to cover; and when sins in the Old Testament are spoken of as atoned, the meaning always is that they were covered, removed, never to be charged upon the person who committed them." "When in common language a man is said to have atoned for his fault by any means, what do we mean by the word? Why, that the punishment which he had incurred is actually removed, or ought to be removed."

"Another word used in the New Testament is propitiation." "A propitiation is that which propitiates, which expiates, which procures exemption from punishment, which renders favorable the person to whom it is offered."

"Another set of words by which the death of Christ is frequently expressed, signify the price paid for the redemption of captives." "The life of Christ is called the ransom." "Now this ransom, being paid and accepted, was considered a sufficient price to obtain the liberation of all those for whom it was offered. When a sufficient price is paid for the redemption of a captive, he cannot with propriety be detained in slavery." "Those, then, for whom Christ has paid a ransom, will surely be actually redeemed."

"Another word, which has formerly been in more constant use with orthodox Christians than any other, is satisfaction." "Justice is considered as offended, and insists upon the condign punishment of the sinner. A surety offers to make satisfaction for the offence, by obeying the law and suffering its penalty. The offer is accepted. The satisfaction is made, and acknowledged to be sufficient. Now the question is, can they

for whom this satisfaction has been made be punished for the same sins for which justice is declared to be satisfied? How can the same crimes be punished twice over in a just government?"

P. If I understand your argument, it is this: The satisfaction which Christ has made consisted partly of his obedience, and partly of his sufferings, and is of such a nature that those for whom it was made cannot be justly punished. And therefore all those must be saved for whom it was made. Do I understand you?

A. You do. For "how can the same crimes be punished twice over in a just government?" But will you give me your views of the nature of the atonement, that I may see how you avoid the same conclusion?

P. I will. But let us first inquire for what purpose an atonement was necessary. If we can get clear ideas of the purpose for which an atonement was necessary, it will help us to judge of its nature. If we can find out what end the atonement was intended to answer, we can better understand the nature of the atonement which infinite wisdom contrived to answer that end.

A. Very well. Proceed.

P. First, then, I ask whether an atonement was necessary to restore to man his moral agency. Some think that by the fall man had lost his moral agency, and that an atonement was necessary to be made that it might be restored. I think it could not be necessary for any such purpose, because man had not lost his moral agency by the fall. A moral agent is one that performs moral actions. Moral actions are those which have moral qualities, that is, are either holy or sinful. If man by the fall had lost his moral agency, he had become incapable of moral action, that is, he had become incapable of doing any thing either holy or sinful. But to suppose that man by the fall had become incapable of sinning, is absurd. An atonement, therefore, was not necessary to restore to man his moral agency, for he had not lost it.

2. I ask whether an atonement was necessary to be made in order to excite the compassion of God. This, I think, no one will affirm; though some things which you said respecting propitiation seem to look like it. You said "A propitiation is that which propitiates, which renders favorable the person to whom it is offered." If you mean that a propitiation is that which renders it consistent for the person to whom it is offered to show favor, I have no objection to the idea. But if you mean that a propitiation is that which renders the person to whom it is offered disposed to show favor; if you mean it is intended to move him to show favor, when without it he would have no such inclination, it cannot be correct as applied to God. He is compassionate in his very nature. "God is love." He who feels no compassion for the miserable, cannot be a good

being. To say that an atonement was necessary in order to move God to compassion, and dispose him to show mercy, represents him as a being destitute of goodness. It represents him as a hard, unfeeling, and cruel tyrant. Instead of representing him as he is, a being of boundless mercy and goodness, every way worthy to be loved, it represents him as a most odious and implacable being, whom every one ought to hate. And further, to say that an atonement was necessary to excite the compassion of God, would be the same as to say that the plan of saving sinners did not originate with him. He had no disposition to save them; he felt no compassion for them; he was hard and unfeeling and implacable, till the Lord Jesus, who was a more benevolent being, and pitied their miserable condition, undertook for them, and by his sufferings and death moved the Father to compassion. But such a representation would be very different from that given in the Scriptures. The Scriptures say, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." It was his compassion for sinners which moved him to provide a Saviour. It was not necessary, therefore, that an atonement should be made to move him to compassion.

3. I ask whether an atonement was necessary to pay God for favors to be bestowed upon us. Such an opinion, I think, cannot be consistent with the representations of Scripture. The Scriptures everywhere speak of the favors we receive from God as grace alone. Grace is favor bestowed upon the ill deserving. The favors we receive from God are not only grace to us who do not deserve them, but it is grace in God to bestow them; and the bestowment of them is spoken of as a manifestation of the "riches of his grace." Where any good bestowed is paid for, there is no room for grace in the bestower. It is frequently thought that Christ obeyed in the room of sinners; and that his obedience created a claim upon God for the blessings he bestows. And that as this obedience was rendered by Christ in the room of sinners, the merit of it is transferred to them, and they consequently have a just claim to those good things for which it paid. This seems to me to bear too close a resemblance to the old popish notion, upon which the sale of indulgences was founded; which was, that Christ had, by his obedience, created a large fund of merit, which was put at the disposal of the Pope, as his representative, and might by him be sold out to those that had need. But the blessings God bestows upon men are entirely of grace, and of course they were not paid for by any thing which Christ did. And consequently an atonement was not necessary to pay God for favors to be bestowed upon us.

A. You were inquiring why an atonement was necessary. Have you any further inquiries to make?

P. Yes. I ask, fourthly, whether an atonement was necessary to sat-

isfy commutative justice. You speak of the atonement as a satisfaction to justice. So do I. But what kind of justice? There are three kinds of justice, differing from each other as they have relation to different things. These are, commutative justice, which relates to commercial transactions, distributive justice, which relates to moral character, and public justice, which relates to the public good. Was an atonement necessary to satisfy commutative justice? It is plain that it was not. For atonement "has relation to sins committed." There is nothing here of a commercial nature. I know that some represent the atonement as a payment of a debt. They represent the sinner as owing a debt to God, and being shut up in prison because he has nothing to pay. They represent Christ as taking upon himself the payment of that debt, and thus purchasing his release. If this were literally true, I grant that the atonement would be necessarily limited; for all those must be discharged whose debt is paid. And not only so, but justice would demand their discharge. The creditor could not hold them any longer without the greatest injustice and oppression. There could be no grace in their discharge; for where a debt is paid there is no grace in releasing the debtor. You will say, perhaps, that the grace of the gospel consists in the gift of a Saviour, and not in the sinner's discharge after his debt is paid. I grant that it would be grace in the creditor to provide for the debtor the means of paying his debt; but is that all the grace of the gospel? Is there, indeed, no grace in the sinner's discharge? When Christians go to a throne of grace in prayer, do they go to demand their right? Do they go to claim justice at the hands of God? Do they not go rather to sue for favor, as suppliants? Do they not go to ask for grace? And do not the Scriptures uniformly speak of the sinner's discharge as an act of grace? Do they not say, "We are justified freely by his grace;" "We have the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace?" It is evident, then, that an atonement was not necessary to satisfy commutative justice.

I acknowledge that some of "the words by which the death of Christ is frequently expressed, signify the price paid for the redemption of captives, and that the life of Christ is called a ransom." But this language is evidently figurative. The blood of Christ was not gold nor silver, nor any other commercial medium. To take figurative language, and draw conclusions from it, as if it was literal, will certainly lead us into mistakes. If this language were to be understood literally, it would indeed follow, as you say, that "When a sufficient price is paid for the redemption of a captive, he cannot with propriety be detained in slavery." It would indeed follow that those for whom the ransom price was paid will surely be actually redeemed. And it would likewise follow, that they

are actually redeemed from eternity, and are not under condemnation at all; since from the moment Christ undertook to pay their debt it was considered as virtually paid. He is considered as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." At any rate, after their ransom was actually paid by his death, "they could not with propriety be detained in slavery." But the Scriptures represent all who are not actually in Christ by faith as under condemnation. "He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him." But all such literal conclusions, drawn from figurative language as if it were literal, are drawn without any foundation, and are a most unwarrantable perversion of the word of God. The atonement, therefore, was not a commercial transaction, and it was not necessary that an atonement should be made to satisfy commutative justice.

5. I ask whether an atonement was necessary to take away our ill desert. This, I think, cannot be said with propriety, although some things which you have said seem to imply it. Speaking of the translators of the Bible, you say, "Of such an atonement as leaves the person for whom it was made forever under the guilt of his sins, they had no idea." Guilt means ill desert. He who has committed a crime is guilty. And after he is pardoned, he is still guilty; for it is still true that he has done wrong, and nothing can render it untrue. If he has been pardoned, it is still true that he has done wrong; and as long as it remains true that he has done wrong, so long it will remain true that he is guilty, and deserves punishment. His pardon exempts him from suffering the punishment he deserves, but does not take away his ill desert. The sinner has broken the law of God, and therefore is guilty; and the fact that Christ has died to procure his pardon, cannot alter the fact that he has transgressed, and therefore cannot alter the truth that he deserves to be punished. And if he is penitent, he feels guilty; he feels that he deserves the displeasure of God. And if he is assured that God has forgiven him, that assurance does not diminish his sense of his own unworthiness and ill desert, but rather serves to increase it. The real penitent loathes and abhors himself as much after he is forgiven as he does before. He feels just as guilty after all apprehension of punishment is removed as he does before. The greatest saint in heaven must still feel disposed to abase himself before God, for the sins he committed while on earth; and will have the sense of his ill desert continually increasing, as long as he continues in the light of eternity, to see more and more of the evil and odious nature of sin. An atonement, therefore, was not necessary to take away our ill desert. No atonement could take it away. And no real penitent can ever feel disposed to palliate or diminish his ill desert, or to wish others to think it less than it really is. He feels that he is a monument of grace, and is willing that others should think so too.

6. I ask whether an atonement was necessary to satisfy distributive justice? Distributive justice has relation to moral character. It demands that every person should be treated according to his moral character. It demands that the guilty should be punished, and the innocent set free. The demands of distributive justice are the same as the demands of the moral law. The moral law requires perfect obedience, upon pain of eternal death. It requires that those who have disobeyed should be punished. Do you think that the atonement satisfied distributive justice?

A. Yes. I think that the atonement "was a full satisfaction to law and justice." "Justice is considered as offended, and insists on the condign punishment of the sinner. A surety offers to make satisfaction for the offence, by obeying the law and suffering its penalty. The offer is accepted. The satisfaction is made, and acknowledged to be sufficient." This is the atonement.

P. But the law demands that the soul that sinneth should die. How can the death of another answer that demand?

A. By the transfer of the sinner's guilt to the person of the surety. "It deserves to be noticed that in the sacrifices which were typical of the great atonement, the idea of the transfer of the sinner's guilt to the expiatory animal is carefully kept up."

P. The law demands that the soul that sinneth should die. It does not demand that another should die in his place. The law says nothing of the substitution of another in the place of the offender. No such substitution, therefore, can answer the demands of the law.

A. But if the sins of an offender can be transferred to the surety so as to become truly and properly his own, then by his death the demands of the law can be answered, and distributive justice satisfied.

P. If the sins of the offender can be transferred to the surety so as to become truly and properly his own — but that cannot be done. What I have done is my own act, and cannot, by any process, become the act of another.

A. But if another person of his own accord offers to bear the punishment of your offences, may he not do it?

P. If another person of his own accord offers to bear the suffering, which was due to me for my offences, he may do it. But it cannot be punishment to him. Punishment supposes guilt. He cannot take my actions upon himself so that they shall become his own actions and cease to be mine. He cannot become guilty without his own personal transgression. If he suffers in my place, therefore, his sufferings are not punishment to him.

I have other objections, however, to the notion of a transfer of our sins to Christ.

1. If our sins are so transferred to Christ as to become his sins, they are no longer ours. We are spotless and holy in our own persons, as God himself. And how inconsistent this is, with the feelings of all real Christians, and with the representations of Scripture respecting them, I need not take time to show.

2. If our sins are so transferred to Christ as to become his sins, we have no need of repentance, for we have no sins of which to repent. It is perfectly idle to talk of our repenting of sins which are not our own.

3. If our sins are so transferred to Christ as to become his sins, we cannot be the subjects of grace. Grace is favor shown to the guilty. If our guilt is transferred to Christ, we have none left; and it is as improper to talk of our being treated with grace as it would be to say it of the holy angels who never sinned.

4. If our sins are so transferred to Christ as to become his sins, and we have none left, we cannot receive pardon at the hands of God. There is no pardon where there is no guilt. Pardon exempts a criminal from the punishment he deserves. There is no pardon in excusing an innocent person from suffering. He does not deserve to suffer. But the Scripture says, "We have the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

5. If our sins are so transferred to Christ as to become his sins, then he suffered justly as an evil-doer, and one that deserved not only to die on the cross, but also deserved eternal damnation, as the greatest sinner in the universe. But the Scripture says he died "the just for the unjust."

A. If the demands of the law are not answered by the death of Christ, if distributive justice is not satisfied, then, when sinners are exempted from punishment, why is not the law dishonored and injustice done; and that too by the authority of God himself? But the Scripture teaches that Christ magnified the law and made it honorable; and it speaks of the death of Christ as taking place, that God might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

P. The reason why the law is not dishonored when sinners are exempted from suffering the punishment it demands is, that Christ has magnified the law and made it honorable, and it is for His sake that they are exempted from punishment. The reason why no injustice is done, when sinners are exempted from suffering the punishment which distributive justice demands, I will give after I shall have given my view of the nature of the atonement. And before I do that, I will ask once more why an atonement was necessary?

A. I have given the reason. The Scripture says it was, "that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

P. Very well. But just to whom? Just to the sinner? No; for, if he treats the sinner according to justice, he will punish him for ever. It is that God might be just to himself, just to his own character, as the righteous Governor of the universe, just to the great interests of the universe, which it belongs to him as the Supreme Ruler to promote.

A. How could the atonement accomplish that end, without satisfying distributive justice?

P. By satisfying public justice. Public justice has relation to the great interests of the universe, and demands that they should be secured. It demands that the greatest good of the universe should be promoted, that the greatest possible sum of happiness among intelligent beings should be brought into existence. The greatest good of the universe comprises the glory of God and the happiness of all holy creatures. The glory of God forms by far the greatest part. To glorify God is to display his perfections, to let the universe see what God is. That all God's perfections should be seen to the best advantage, a system must be contrived which would give opportunity for the exercise of them all. That his mercy might be seen, it was necessary that there should be sinners, and that sinners should be pardoned, and raised to a throne of glory in heaven. But how could this be done? How could the sinner be forgiven, and be raised to a throne of glory in heaven? The law had threatened eternal death as the just demerit of sin. By giving a law with this penalty annexed, God had declared that he was infinitely opposed to sin, and hated it with all his heart. The object of the penalty annexed to the law was to show the evil nature of sin, and how the Law-giver felt towards it. For God to exempt the sinner from punishment without an atonement, and to exalt him at his own right hand, would be to say, in the strongest language, that sin was not an evil, but a good, and that he did not abhor it, but regarded it with approbation, and was disposed to confer upon it the highest rewards. And for God to do any thing which could be so construed, would be infinitely dishonorable to himself, and subversive of the highest interests of the universe. It would be a violation of public justice. Unless, therefore, something could be done to prevent these consequences, we must conclude that sin could never be forgiven, and that the law must take its course and be executed upon transgressors.

A. Yes. "If we form honorable ideas of the perfections of God, we must suppose that his treatment of sinners will be uniform, and therefore that all will suffer exactly in proportion to their demerit, unless some scheme be devised by which the ends of punishment can be completely answered, and yet the sinner spared."

P. You have brought to view the true reason why an atonement was

necessary, and what purpose it was intended to answer. The atonement was a "scheme devised" by infinite wisdom, "by which the ends of punishment can be completely answered, and yet the sinner spared." The great end of punishment was to manifest God's hatred of sin. If any expedient could be found out which would answer that end, as well as the actual infliction of the threatened penalty upon transgressors, then that penalty could be dispensed with, and mercy might be exercised in the pardon of sinners. Such an expedient infinite wisdom has devised. The Lord Jesus Christ has laid down his life "the just for the unjust." By his death the evil of sin has been made to appear in a light infinitely stronger than it ever could have appeared in the condemnation of a world. By doing this, he has magnified the law and made it honorable, although the execution of its threatening of death to the sinner is dispensed with. By his death, public justice is satisfied. The evils which would have followed from the pardon of the sinner without an atonement are effectually guarded against. And now, God can be just, just to himself, just to his own character as the righteous governor of the universe, and yet forgive sinners for Christ's sake.

A. And yet I should say that the demands of the law are answered by what Christ has done.

P. No. The law did not demand the death of Christ. It demanded the death of the sinner. The death of Christ, therefore, has not met its demand. But by the death of Christ, that has been done which magnifies the law, and renders it consistent with its honor that its demands should be dispensed with, as respects all those who will accept of Christ as their Saviour.

A. But if distributive justice is not satisfied in behalf of sinners, then when they are exempted from punishment, why is not injustice done? You promised to answer this question.

P. I will answer it. Distributive justice demands that the soul that sinneth should die. It demanded that Christ should be honored, and the sinner punished. By Christ's dying, while the sinner lives, therefore, its demands are not met. No injustice is done, however. Injustice consists in treating persons worse than they deserve. No one is treated worse than he deserves. When persons are treated better than they deserve, that is not injustice, but grace. Grace has respect to distributive justice, and suspends its exercise towards the guilty. If you insist that distributive justice must be satisfied in all cases, you shut out the possibility of grace altogether. There can be no grace unless the guilty are exempted from the punishment which distributive justice demands. Perhaps you will ask, why then was not injustice done to Christ, since he suffered what he did not deserve? To this I answer, his sufferings

were perfectly voluntary. He took them upon himself. If those sufferings had been inflicted upon him without his consent, he would have been treated with injustice. But distributive justice was not exercised in the infliction of those sufferings upon him, for he was not a sinner.

A. How does it follow, from this view of the nature of the atonement, that it was made for all men?

P. It was a satisfaction to public justice by which the ends of punishment are answered; and the exercise of mercy in the pardon of sinners is rendered consistent with the honor of the law and the character of God as a righteous governor. In consequence of it, God can be "just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." It is, from its very nature, as sufficient for one man as for another, and for all men as for one man. And as all men receive some benefits from this atonement, according to your own concessions, for you say that "in consequence of the mediation of Christ, men are placed here in a condition of comfort, or at least in a mixed state, where many blessings and privileges are enjoyed;" and as this atonement lays a foundation for the offer of mercy to be sincerely made to all indiscriminately, as you also grant, I see not how you can possibly avoid the conclusion which I draw from it, that it was actually made for all men.

A. But the atonement was a cover for sin. "The Hebrew word for atonement signifies to cover." When, therefore, sins are spoken of as atoned, the meaning is that they were covered, removed, never to be charged upon the person who committed them.

P. Do you believe that the elect are under condemnation till the moment they believe in Christ?

A. Yes. The Scripture says, "He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him."

P. The atonement was made eighteen hundred years ago, and those of the elect who have not yet believed are still under condemnation. But their sins were atoned for as soon as Christ had laid down his life. According to you, therefore, their sins were actually "covered, removed, never to be charged upon" them; and yet they are not covered nor removed, but are charged upon them, and for them they are condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on them. This looks very much like a contradiction.

A. How, then, do you consider the atonement a cover for sin?

P. There is a difference between a cover for and a cover of. That is a cover for, which is prepared and adapted to be a cover of. The atonement is a cover for sin, because it is adapted to be a cover of sin; but it does not become a cover of sin to any individual till he puts it on, that is, till he actually believes in Christ and receives his pardon.

A. But atonement means the same as reconciliation. "For he whose sins are atoned is reconciled."

P. Reconciled, and yet under condemnation ! Reconciled, and yet in his sins ! Reconciled to God, and yet hating him with all his heart ! No ; it is impossible. The apostle prays sinners to be reconciled to God. He does not pray them to make atonement. Sinners never make atonement ; that was the work of Christ. Sinners become reconciled by accepting the atonement which Christ has made. Atonement and reconciliation are therefore very different things.

A. But "the end actually accomplished by the death of Christ must be learned from the sacred Scriptures, and not from the theories of man." Men may theorize very speciously ; "But this is a point of too much magnitude to be decided by mere reasoning. Let us hear what God hath spoken : 'To the law and the testimony,' we make an appeal, and by them we are willing it should be decided."

P. I cordially agree with you in this, and beg you will bear it in mind when we come, by and by, to see "what God hath spoken," as to the extent of the atonement. For the present I wish merely to consider your arguments. What is your fourth argument to prove that Christ died for the elect only ?

A. It is this : "Christ offered himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice in the office of a priest." Now, "His priestly office is not performed for any by the halves." Therefore "for whom Christ offered himself a sacrifice, for the same does he intercede. But he intercedes, it is agreed, for none but his own people ; therefore, he died for none but his own people."

P. I grant that Christ is the priest of his people, and that he does not perform his priestly office for any "by the halves." But to conclude from this that he will intercede for the salvation of all those for whom he died, is to take it for granted that he could not possibly die for any but his own people. It is to take it for granted, that he could not have any object in dying for any, unless he intended to save them. To assume this is to assume the very point in dispute. To assume the point in dispute, is what logicians call begging the question. It is usually considered an indication of a weak cause, and that the supporter of it feels it to be so.

A. Do you grant, then, that Christ intercedes for none but his own people ?

P. No. I grant that he does not intercede for the salvation of any but his own people, for he did not intend to save any others. But he intended to secure the enjoyment of "many blessings and privileges" to the non-elect, as you grant. Now, if he intended by his death to obtain

for the non-elect these blessings, I see not why it should be thought incredible that he should ask the Father to bestow them. He intended by his death to procure for the non-elect a period of probation and the offer of mercy : and I see not why it should be thought incredible, that, after having died to procure for them these blessings, he should ask the Father to bestow them.

A. But does not Christ say expressly, "I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me?"

P. In that particular prayer he prayed for his disciples, and for none others. And he prayed for such blessings for them as are never bestowed upon any but his disciples. But this does not prove that when God bestows other blessings upon other men, he does not do it in answer to the requests of his Son. You beg the question, therefore, in both points of your argument. And besides that, you contradict what you had before granted, that "many blessings and privileges" are bestowed upon the non-elect, "in consequence of the mediation of Christ." Mediation includes intercession as well as atonement. According to your own concession, therefore, he does, in some respects, intercede for the non-elect. What is your fifth argument?

A. It is this : "The death of Christ is the cause of all spiritual blessings ; it is, therefore, the cause of the gift of faith. Those, therefore, for whom Christ died, will be made partakers of faith. But none receive the gift of faith but the elect ; therefore Christ died for none else."

P. This argument is a mere sophism. It has all the formality of a regular syllogism, but nothing more. I will give you one or two like it. 1. God is the giver of all good things ; he is therefore the giver of faith. But he gives faith to none but the elect ; therefore he gives no good things to any but the elect. 2. The combined influence of the rain and the sun is the cause of vegetation. But there is no vegetation upon the barren rock ; therefore, the rain never descends and the sun never shines upon the barren rock. But these conclusions are evidently false, and so is the one you draw. To make your argument correct, it ought to be this : the death of Christ secures the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings to those for whom he died ; it therefore secures to them the gift of faith. But faith is given to none but the elect ; therefore Christ died for none else. This would be a correct syllogism, and the conclusion would follow, if it were true, that the death of Christ does actually secure the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings to all those for whom he died. To assume that it does is to assume the very point in dispute. It is begging the question again. This argument, however, is good on the other side, and proves that Christ died for all men.

A. How so?

P. Thus : the death of Christ is the cause of all the blessings bestowed upon sinful men. No blessings can be bestowed upon sinners without an atonement. Therefore, no blessings can be bestowed upon any of our sinful race for whom Christ did not die. But many blessings are bestowed upon all men ; therefore, Christ died for all men. What is your sixth argument ?

A. It is this : " If Christ actually died for all men, then he died for many whose salvation had become impossible, and to whom the offer of mercy never could be made ;" for they were already in hell. Did he die for those already in hell ?

P. " If Christ actually died for all " the elect, " then he died for many whose salvation " was already accomplished, " and to whom the offer of mercy never could be made ;" for they were already in heaven. Did he die for those already in heaven ?

A. Yes. For those already in heaven had gone there by faith in the Saviour that was to come.

P. And those already in hell had gone there for want of faith in the Saviour that was to come. The truth is, the Saviour was revealed immediately after the fall, and men were saved by faith in him, or condemned for their unbelief, just as they are now.

A. But " of what avail is it to the soul in torment, that Christ is dying for him on earth, seeing his misery is not the least mitigated thereby ? "

P. That is, what good could it do him ? This, again, is assuming that Christ could not have any object in dying for any, unless he intended to save them. It is begging the question again.

A. But " If Christ died for all, then justice was, at the same moment, exacting punishment from the offender himself, and from the Redeemer." And " how can the same crimes be punished twice over in a just government ? "

P. They cannot be punished twice over. Christ was not punished at all. And the satisfaction he made was not a satisfaction to the law, nor to distributive justice. It follows from your principles and not from mine, that the law is satisfied twice over, or rather, as I should think, three times over.

A. How so ?

P. You believe that Christ obeyed the law for his people, do you not ?

A. Yes. He made satisfaction " by obeying the law," as well as " by suffering its penalty."

P. Was not Christ's obedience perfect ?

A. Yes. The Scripture says, He was " holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."

P. Does not perfect obedience satisfy the law ?

A. Yes. Where there is perfect obedience, the law has no further demand.

P. If Christ obeyed the law perfectly and did that for his people, that was satisfying the law once. Then, if he suffered the penalty of the law, and bore the punishments of their sins, that was satisfying the law twice. And after that, they are forgiven; that is, after the demands of the law have been satisfied twice over, they are dispensed with by forgiveness; which is equal to satisfying it the third time.

A. But, "if Christ died for all men, then he atoned for sins which are never pardoned. But what sort of an atonement is that for a sin, which does not render it possible for the punishment of it to be removed? The sin against the Holy Ghost, and final impenitence and unbelief, never can be pardoned, and to suppose them atoned for is absurd."

P. On the same principle I should say, while the elect are without repentance their sin cannot be pardoned. But to suppose a sin atoned for which cannot be pardoned is absurd. Therefore, to suppose the sin of the elect atoned for while they are without repentance is absurd. The truth is, that the reason why the sin against the Holy Ghost, and final impenitence and unbelief, are not pardoned, is because they are not repented of, not because the atonement is not as sufficient for them as for any other sins. What is your seventh argument?

A. It is this: "The death of Christ is of no avail to those who have never heard of this event; for how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Now, if Christ died for all men, would he permit so many millions of them to remain in total ignorance of an event in which they are so deeply interested?

P. That is, again, what good could it do them? This is assuming that Christ could not die for any unless he intended to save them, which is begging the question again. And you have answered this argument yourself, as often as you have conceded that "in consequence of the mediation of Christ" all men do enjoy "many blessings and privileges." But if you still ask why God does not actually send the gospel to all men, I will answer it when you have answered a few questions like these: Why does he not actually save all men? Why does he not, at least, save all who enjoy the light of the gospel? Why does he not place all the elect in the same favorable circumstances for knowing and serving him? Why does he not create them all with the same natural powers of body and mind, and give them all the same opportunities for improvement, that they may all be prepared for the same degree of happiness in heaven? Why does he convert one in the morning of life, and another not till the close of it? Why does he favor one with the clearest knowledge of divine truth, and leave another to embrace many errors, which greatly retard

his growth in grace, and consequently lessen his religious enjoyment and usefulness? If Christ loved them well enough to die for them and save them, why did he not love them enough to make them as wise and as holy as Gabriel? What is your eighth argument to prove that Christ died for the elect only?

A. It is this: "It is derogatory to the honor of the Redeemer that so great a portion of those for whom he died should ultimately perish. It is an unworthy thought of the Almighty Saviour, that he should permit Satan to triumph over millions of those whom he purchased with his own blood."

P. This argument begs the question again. It supposes that Christ did not die for any but those he intended to save. It would indeed be "derogatory to the honor of the Redeemer," that a great portion of those whom he intended to save "should ultimately perish." It would indeed be "an unworthy thought of the Almighty Saviour, that he should permit Satan to triumph over millions of those whom he intended to save. But that is not the case. He saves all he intended to save. And he accomplishes the objects he had in view in dying for others. What these objects are, has been already shown. What is your ninth argument?

A. It is this: "This doctrine of the general atonement takes away from the true believer one of the most interesting and edifying views of this event which can be presented to him. When he contemplates the death of Christ, he beholds the most striking and affecting manifestation of the special love of God to him. But if the atonement is as much for reprobates as for him, how is it an evidence of any great and special love? It is no ground of consolation to know that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me, because a reprobate may know the same."

P. How can it be any satisfaction to me to enjoy the common blessings of Providence, unless I have them all to myself? How can it be any gratification to me to sit down to a table loaded with all the dainties in nature, if other persons are invited as well as I? How can it be any consolation to me to know that I am going to heaven to enjoy the presence of my God and Saviour, if millions of the human race are to enjoy them as well as myself? My enjoyments of them will surely be diminished in exact proportion to the number of those who shall with me be partakers of them. Are these Christian feelings? Are they agreeable to the common feelings of humanity? what is it but naked selfishness? What is your tenth argument?

A. It is this: "The sacred Scriptures in many places restrict the death of Christ to his people."

P. Will you favor me with some of these many places?"

A. Yes. Christ says, "I lay down my life for the sheep." Again, it is said, "The church which he purchased with his own blood."

P. But where is the restriction? I confess I do not see it. He laid down his life "for the sheep." Who disputes that? If it was the will of God "that he should taste death for every man," he must of course have laid down his life for the sheep.

A. I acknowledge "that these and such like passages do not, in so many words, declare that he died for no others. Yet they have no force or apparent propriety, unless thus understood."

P. You acknowledge, then, that the passages you mention do not expressly restrict the death of Christ to his people? The whole force of your argument, then, comes to this: These passages do not appear to you to have any force or propriety, unless you understand them agreeably to your own scheme. But if we form our opinions first, and then interpret the Scriptures in such a manner as to make them accord with our opinions, I am afraid we shall never come to any certainty respecting any of the doctrines of the Bible.

A. But "if Christ laid down his life for his sheep, as such, whether yet called or not, then he lays not down his life for the goats, or for those who are not of his fold. If he, as the shepherd, lays down his life, then certainly for none but his sheep."

P. I feel no difficulty in admitting that there is a sense in which Christ laid down his life for the sheep, in which he did not for others. But I contend also that there is a sense in which he laid down his life for all alike. As far as his object in laying down his life was to secure the salvation of those for whom he died, he laid down his life for the sheep only; for he never intended to secure the salvation of any others. But as far as his object in laying down his life was to place men in a state of probation, in a state in which they might be saved if they would; in a state in which their salvation or their perdition should depend entirely upon their own voluntary choice, so far he laid down his life for all alike. If you understand these and such like passages in the first sense, I have no objection; for on that point we have no dispute. But to infer from that that he could have no object in laying down his life for others, is to take for granted the very point in dispute. The passages you mention are totally silent on that subject; and, therefore, are nothing to the purpose. Have you any other argument to prove that Christ died for the elect only?

A. Yes. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of particular election to suppose that Christ died for all men.

P. How so?

A. The doctrine of election is, that God gave a certain number of our fallen race to the Son, and the salvation of these he undertook to accomplish by laying down his life. To suppose, therefore, that all men were

given to him, and that he undertook to save all by laying down his life, is inconsistent with the doctrine of election.

P. This is not my view of the doctrine of election. You put the doctrine of election in the wrong place, and confound the decree of election with the covenant of redemption. My view of the subject is this: All men sinned — Christ laid down his life for all — the offer of mercy is authorized to be made to all — all, with one consent, refuse the offer. Here, then, comes in the purpose of election — God determined that he would make some willing to accept the offer. And in pursuance of this determination, he sends his Spirit to make them willing in the day of his power.

A. “To this theory I object that there is no succession in the divine decrees, but God wills all things by one most comprehensive and perfect purpose.”

P. I grant that there is no succession in the divine decrees, as to the order of time. They have all existed from eternity. But there is a succession in the order of nature; and you yourself suppose it as much as I do. You suppose that it was determined that man should fall, and need a Saviour; and that in consequence of this, God determined to provide a Saviour for a part of mankind.

A. “Admitting an order in the divine decrees,” the order you suppose “is preposterous; because it supposes God to determine upon a most important and costly means, before he had purposed any particular end to be accomplished by it.”

P. Not at all. The particular end God had in view to accomplish was his own glory. As means to accomplish this great end, infinite wisdom has devised, infinite goodness adopted, and infinite power is carrying into execution, the whole plan of the divine administration. This great plan includes all events. All events, therefore, are to be considered as means, which infinite wisdom has contrived to operate in different ways for the accomplishment of this great end. The fall of man, the death of Christ for all, the offer of mercy to all, the rejection of the offer by all, the making of some willing to accept it, the salvation of those who do accept it, the aggravated condemnation and final perdition of those who persist in their refusal — these are all means, and “most important and costly means” too, for the accomplishment of that great end. And I see not why the order in which I have mentioned them is not their natural order.

A. But I have another objection; your scheme “furnishes no sufficient motive to produce such a grand event” as Christ’s dying for all men.

P. No sufficient motive! Is the glory of God no sufficient motive? Where will you find one of greater magnitude? But the ends accomplished by Christ’s dying for all men have been already pointed out. I

need not repeat them here. Have you any other argument to prove that Christ died for the elect only?

A. I have mentioned the principal; but I will suggest one more, the identity of atonement and redemption. As they signify the same thing, all who are atoned for are redeemed. But the elect only are redeemed; therefore the atonement was made for none else.

P. Atonement and redemption are not the same thing. Atonement is satisfaction *for* sin; redemption is deliverance *from* sin. The atonement was finished when Christ rose from the dead; but the redemption of any individual is not finished till he is freed from sin by complete sanctification, and received to heaven. Christ is said to have "obtained eternal redemption for us;" not eternal atonement, surely. The apostle exhorts Christians, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption;" not the day of atonement, for that was past already. And when the Son of Man shall be seen coming in the clouds of heaven, his people are exhorted, "Then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh;" not your atonement draweth nigh, for that was accomplished long since. If atonement and redemption were the same thing, it would be as improper to pray for redemption as for atonement. To pray for atonement would be to pray that Christ might die again. No Christian prays for atonement. But Christians may pray for redemption. They may pray with the Scripture saints, "Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it." "Redeem me, and be merciful unto me." Atonement and redemption, therefore, are different things; and the argument which is built upon their identity is built upon the sand.

A. Will you state your arguments to prove that Christ died for all men?

P. Most of them have been brought into view in the course of the preceding discussion; but I will briefly repeat them.

1. All who hear the gospel are invited to partake of its blessings. But if Christ has not died for them all, they cannot be sincerely invited. The invitation amounts to a declaration that there is salvation provided for them, which they may have if they will. If Christ has not died for them all, this declaration is untrue, and the invitation a mere mockery.

2. It is made the duty of all who hear the gospel to accept of Christ as their Saviour. But it cannot be their duty, if Christ has not died for them. It cannot be the duty of devils to accept of Christ as their Saviour, for he did not die for devils.

3. Those who refuse to accept of Christ as their Saviour are condemned and punished for their unbelief. But how can they be justly punished for not accepting a Saviour who was never provided for them?

4. The atonement was a satisfaction to public justice, designed to ren-

der it consistent for God to show mercy ; and from its very nature must be general.

5. All men do receive many blessings at the hands of God, as you have granted. And "this occurs in consequence of the mediation of Christ," as you have also granted ; for where there is no atonement, no mercy can be shown. Since many mercies, therefore, are actually bestowed upon all men, on account of Christ's death, it follows that Christ died for all.

6. All men are placed here in a state of probation. A state of probation for eternity necessarily supposes that those who enjoy it have an opportunity to secure their eternal salvation. But those for whom Christ did not die have no such opportunity. No exertions of theirs could ever render it possible for them to be saved.

7. The testimony of Scripture is express and full upon this subject. Let me remind you of what you have said yourself. "This is a point of too much magnitude to be decided by mere reasoning. Let us hear what God hath spoken. 'To the law and the testimony,' we make an appeal." What, then, do the Scriptures say upon this subject ?

1 John 2 : 2 ; "And he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Heb. 2 : 9 ; "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor ; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

1 Tim. 2 : 6 ; "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

2 Cor. 5 : 14, 15 ; "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

John 1 : 29 ; "The next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !"

John 3 : 16 ; "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

That Christ died for some who actually perish, see 2 Pet. 2 : 1 ; "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

A. But you must admit that the words *world* and *all* are sometimes used in a limited sense ; and therefore they may be so used in these

passages. "The word *world* is used in the sacred Scriptures for the whole fabric of heaven and earth, sometimes for the heavens distinguished from the earth, for the men in the world, either the whole or a part, sometimes for the Roman empire, for God's people, for the wicked, and for a worldly condition or state." "It is evident," then, "that no great stress should, in this argument, be laid on a word so vague and ambiguous in its meaning." "The word *all*, is in the same predicament."

P. I am willing to grant, for the sake of giving your objection all possible force, that these words are used in the various senses you mention. Not, however, that I believe the word *world* is ever used for God's people as distinguished from others. What, then, is the force of your objection? It is plainly this, that because these words are sometimes used in a limited sense, they may be so used in the texts I have quoted, and that you are at liberty to put this construction upon them if you please. But where will this principle lead us? Let us apply it to a few cases. The word *God* is sometimes used to signify a civil ruler, therefore, according to this principle of interpretation, it may be so understood in any given text. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," may mean, In the beginning a civil ruler created the heavens and the earth. The word *everlasting* is sometimes used to signify a limited duration; therefore, it may be so understood in any given text: and, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," may mean, These shall go away into a punishment of limited duration. And when the saints are promised everlasting life, it may mean a life of limited duration. And when Christ is styled the "Mighty God, the Everlasting Father," it may mean, the mighty civil ruler, the Father of a limited duration. The word *salvation* is sometimes used to signify deliverance from a temporal calamity; therefore, it may be so understood in any given text, and there may be no salvation but deliverance from temporal calamities. The word *resurrection* is sometimes used to signify regeneration; therefore it may be so understood in any given text, and there may be no resurrection foretold in the Scriptures but regeneration. The word *baptism* is sometimes used to signify sufferings; therefore, it may be so understood in any given text; and the command to the apostles to go and baptize all nations may mean that they should go and inflict sufferings upon all nations. A principle of interpretation which leads into such absurdities cannot be admitted as a correct rule of interpreting the word of God. Under the operation of such a rule, the Bible would become, as some pretend it is, a book by which any thing can be supported and nothing proved. Every part of it would become "vague and ambiguous in its meaning."

A. How can we know, then, when to understand these universal terms in their limited, and when in their unlimited sense?

P. When a universal term is to be understood in a restricted or limited sense, that restriction or limitation is made manifest by the manner in which it is used, or by something which accompanies it. And this is a general rule for the interpretation of Scripture. The Scripture means as it says; that is, every word is to be understood in its plainest and most obvious sense, unless the manner in which it is used, or something which accompanies it, makes it manifest that it is used in that instance in a different sense. If this is not the way in which Scripture is to be understood, how shall we ever know what the Scripture teaches on any subject? And more especially, how shall plain, unlearned people know any thing about the doctrines of the Bible? The Bible was intended for a Revelation. It was intended for the use of the ignorant, and for children. It is declared to be so plain that he that runneth may read, and the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err. But if the Holy Ghost has made a mistake on this subject, and used words so "vague and ambiguous in their meaning" that no dependence can be placed upon them, "it fails of being" a Revelation, "whatever may have been intended."

A. But the passage you mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "that he should taste death for every man," is not translated right. The original is, *ὑπὲρ παντός*, for all. *Man* is not in the text. And the question is, to whom this *all* refers."

P. I must beg leave to differ from you there. And I think such an objection comes with a very bad grace from one who claims that the translators of the Bible were of the same opinion with himself, on the subject of the atonement. *Παντός* is an adjective, in the masculine gender, singular number, and must agree with some noun, understood, of the same gender and number. The word *man*, therefore, is undoubtedly the word understood, and was properly supplied by our translators. But if you object to the word *man*, I am willing to leave it out; and then the literal rendering of *ὑπὲρ παντός* would be "for every one;" and the most natural and obvious meaning would be, that Christ tasted death for every man, woman, and child of our race. If it had been for all, the original would have been *ὑπὲρ παντῶν*, in the plural. But even that would have been no better for your cause.

A. I wish also to make an observation upon the passage from the Epistle to Timothy, "Who gave himself a ransom for *all*." The whole stress of the argument here is upon the word *all*; but our brethren who oppose us here must qualify the word *all*, as used in the fourth verse, "Who will have *all* men to be saved," and therefore, they should allow us to do the same in the sixth.

P. Not at all. We do not "qualify the word *all* as used in the fourth verse." We believe it means *all*, in both verses. There is no manifest restriction accompanying it, in either case, and therefore we protest against any such restriction being put upon it, by any human authority.

A. Then you must believe that all men will actually be saved!

P. By no means. We believe that God does, in itself considered, sincerely desire the salvation of all, because it is, in itself, very desirable that all should be saved. But he does not, on the whole, all things considered, determine to save all; because it is not, on the whole, best that all should be saved.

Since, therefore, the Scriptures plainly declare, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," and that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," and that Christ "gave himself a ransom for all." "That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man," that he "died for all," and is "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and that some who perish "bring upon themselves swift destruction," by "denying the Lord that bought them," you must allow me to believe that Christ did not die for the elect only, but for all men.

END.

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